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THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman ’”.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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आयन्ते योगिनो योगात् सिद्धाः सिद्धेश्वराश्च यम् ।

तं ध्याये सततं शुद्धं भगवन्तं सनातनम् ॥

सेवे तं सततं सन्तो ब्रह्मेशोऽसंशकाः ।

सेवन्ते निगुणं ब्रह्म भगवन्तं सनातनम् ॥

विलिप्तं च निरीहं च परमात्मानमीश्वरम् ।

नित्यं सत्यं च परमं भगवन्तं सनातनम् ॥

सर्गाणामादिभूतं च सर्वबीजं परात्परम् ।

योगिनो तं प्रपद्यन्ते भगवन्तं सनातनम् ॥

बीजं नानावताराणां सर्वकारणकारणम् ।

वेदावेद्यं वेदबीजं वेदकारणकारणम् ।

योगिनो यं प्रपद्यन्ते तं प्रपद्ये सनातनम् ॥

Always do I meditate on that Being Supreme, who is eternal and pure, who is meditated upon in Samadhi by the Siddhas, Siddheswaras and the Yogins. I always serve that Lord Eternal, who is attributeless and unattached, without desires, and the Spirit Supreme, Truth itself and the Highest God who is always served by the Creator, Preserver and the Destroyer of the universe and other virtuous souls.

I salute the Eternal Bhagavan who is realised by the Yogins as the First-born in creation, the Seed of all, higher than the Highest, who is the Seed of various incarnations, the Cause of all causes, Unknowable by the Vedas, the Seed and the Cause of the Vedas and who is obtained by the Yogins.

SRI NARADA PANCH RATNAM.

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

I

At 4 in the afternoon of Saturday, the 21st July, 1883, Sri Ramakrishna with Ramlal and two more devotees was going in a carriage to Calcutta to pay visits to the houses of Adhar, Jadu Mallik and Khelat Ghosh. As he came out of the gate of the Garden, he found Mani approaching with a few mangoes in his hands and stopped his carriage. Mani came and bowed at the feet of the Master, and being invited to accompany him, took his seat in the carriage.

Mani is an English-educated gentleman, and did not believe in *Samskaras* (inherent tendencies derived from previous incarnations). He had however admitted to the Master a few days ago that Adhar's supreme devotion to the Master was due to his *Samskaras*. But on going home he found that he was not yet fully convinced of the truth of the theory of inherent tendencies. An elucidation of this point was the special objective of his present visit.

Sri Ramakrishna asked him, "What is your opinion of Adhar?"

Mani : I think he has great devotion.

Sri Ramakrishna : Adhar also holds a high opinion of you.

[Inscrutable ways of the Lord]

After a short silence, Mani said to the Master, "I do not find myself believing in reincarnation or inherent tendencies. Will that stand in the way of my devotion?"

Sri Ramakrishna : Enough if you believe that all is possible in His creation. Do not allow the dogmatism to possess your mind which says that 'I alone am true, all else are false'. The Lord Himself will see to the rest.

"What indeed will man understand of His ways? Infinite are his manifestations! I therefore make no effort to understand these. I have heard that nothing is impossible in His world, this is enough for me and I meditate on Him alone to the exclusion of all other thoughts. A man once enquired of Hanuman

*Translated from the Diary of M., a disciple, published originally in Bengali.

what day of the fortnight it was. Hanu. said that he did not know what day of the week or fortnight it was, and that his only thought was Rama.

“Inscrutable are the ways of God ! So near, yet so impossible to know Him ! Even Balaram did not know that Sri Krishna was the Lord Himself !”

Mani : Quite true, just as you said of Bhishma.

Sri Ramakrishna : What did I say of him ?

Mani : Bhishma was crying lying on his bed of arrows. The Pandavas said to Sri Krishna, ‘How surprising ! Our grandfather who is so wise, is yet crying in fear of death !’ Sri Krishna told them to ask Bhishma the reason of his tears. Bhishma replied, ‘I am crying at the thought of the mystery of the Lord’s ways. O Krishna, though you yourself are ever moving with the Pandavas and protecting them, yet they have no end of their sorrows !’

[A Revelation]

Sri Ramakrishna : He has covered everything with His Maya and does not allow us to know anything. What is Maya ?—It is Kamini-kanchana. Whoever can remove this veil of Maya, can see Him. As I was once explaining this, the vision suddenly came to me of a large tank of my village, in which I saw a man drink water by removing the water hyacinth from over the surface. The water was crystal-pure. The idea was that the Sachchidananda was as it were covered by the hyacinth of Maya. He alone will have Him who would remove it.

“Listen, I am going to reveal a secret to you. Once going to answer the call of nature, I had the vision of a sort of secret door before me, but I could not see what lay behind it. I tried to make a hole with a nail-cutter, but every time the hole was made it got filled up. At last however I succeeded in making such a big aperture !”

But Sri Ramakrishna could not proceed further. After a while he remarked, “These are very high things. Just see some one is pressing close my lips !

“His consciousness makes the world conscious. Sometimes I find the little fishes completely saturated with the same consciousness.”

By that time the carriage had come to the crossing of the Sovabazar near Darmahatta. The Master continued "Sometimes I see that like rain waters His consciousness has overflowed and interpenetrated the whole universe. But in spite of all these visions and realisations, I do not feel the least proud."

Mani (smiling) : The idea of your being proud !

Sri Ramakrishna : Indeed I tell you I do not feel the least elated.

Mani : There once lived in Greece a man named Socrates whom the oracle declared to be the wisest of men. Surprised at the declaration, the man thought long in solitude and at last said to his friends, ' Yes, I understand.—I alone know that I know nothing, whereas all others knowing nothing think yet that they know.'

Sri Ramakrishna : Sometimes I think, ' What do I know that so many people come to visit me ? ' Vaishnavacharan was a great scholar. He used to say, ' What all you say can be found in the Shastras. Do you know why yet I come to you ? To hear them from your lips.'

Mani : Yes, all your utterances agree with the books. Navadwip Goswami also said the same thing the other day at Panihati. You said that when continuously repeated the word *Gita* hears as *tyagi*. Not exactly *tyagi* however, but *tagi*. Now, Navadwip Goswami said that both *tagi* and *tyagi* mean the same thing ; *tagi* is derived from the root *tagi*.'

Sri Ramakrishna : Do you observe any similarity between me and any other Sadhu or scholar ?

Mani : God has fashioned you with His own hands. Others he has moulded in a machine, according to fixed laws.

Sri Ramakrishna was surprised at these words and burst into a long laughter. At last he remarked, " But really I tell you I am not the least affected thereby."

Mani : Perhaps learning is of this much good that it shows that we know nothing and we are nothing.

Sri Ramakrishna : Quite true. Indeed, we are nothing..... Well, do you believe in English Astronomy ?

Mani : According to it, there can be new discoveries. By noting the irregular movements of the Uranus, they came to discover a new star (Neptune) through the telescope. An eclipse also can be calculated according to it.

Sri Ramakrishna : May be.

The Master's carriage was nearing the house of Adhar Sen, when he remarked to Mani, " Ever rest on Truth, that will bring you God-realisation."

Mani : You also gave another advice to Navadwip Goswami, to pray to God to remain free of His Maya.—' O God, Thee only I seek, do not bind me by Thy world-deluding Maya,—Thee alone I want ! '

Sri Ramakrishna : Yes, you must sincerely ask this of Him.

II

When Sri Ramakrishna reached Adhar's house, he was welcomed into his parlour. The devotees also seated themselves. Some neighbours came to see Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Adhar) : Have you not sent word to Rakhal ?

[Rakhal was at that time living with his father in the city.]

Adhar : Yes, Sir, I have.

But seeing the anxiety of the Master for Rakhal, Adhar sent his carriage and a man immediately to fetch him.

This present visit of Sri Ramakrishna to Adhar proved to be providential. There was no previous appointment. But Adhar, it appeared, had been very anxious to see the Master. And the Master came.

Adhar : You have not come here these many days. I called on you to-day and shed tears.

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling out of pleasure) : Is it so ?

Slowly it became dark, lamps were lighted in the parlour. And Sri Ramakrishna, having saluted the Divine Mother with folded palms, silently repeated the sacred Mantram. He then recited the sacred names of the Lord.—Govinda ! Govinda ! Sachchidananda ! Haribol ! etc. And such was the sweetness of his voice, that the hearers felt themselves absorbed in an elysian joy.

Ramlal, being asked, sang :

“ O Delight of Siva, thou hast deluded the world ! Verily, the mystery is unfathomable !

“ O Mother, I have heard that thy name dispels all fear. I surrender my burden unto thee, redeem me or not as thou wilt.

“ Thou sustainest the whole universe and pervadest all beings. Who can know thee ? Who can say whether thou art Kali or Radha ?

“ O Mother, thou abidest in the heart of every being, and as the Kundalini in the Basic Lotus.....

“ Higher still in the throat, there is a sixteen-petalled lotus of the colour of smoke, which contains a void in its centre ; and when this lotus is transcended, it is all void.”

When Ramlal sang the last stanza, the Master said to M., “ Note this. This is what is meant by the realisation of the Formless. When the Vishuddha Chakra is transcended, ‘ it is all void.’ Going beyond this relative world of Maya, Jiva and Jagat you attain to the Absolute. Transcendence of the Logos is the condition of Samadhi. You do it by continuous repetition of Aum and then you plunge into Samadhi.”

LESSONS OF HISTORY

Man has ever been confronted with a multiplicity of problems relating to the individual as well as national life, and the intelligence and energies of man have never ceased to unravel the tangled skein of human existence. The principles that govern and mould the life of an individual guide in no small measure the silent process of development in the collective life of a nation. The problems therefore in the life of an individual or in that of a nation are more or less the ever recurrent problems facing the cosmic life of humanity at large. Intricate as the problems are, they have presented themselves in every age in all their lurid variety, and even to-day they seem to baffle all human effort for solution by their complexity and magnitude. The Old Year has passed away and the New Year has stepped in, and it is indeed time that we must feel the hard realities on which we stand and try to evaluate the nature of progress that humanity has made in the name of ‘ peace and good will.’ The Vedanta Kesari whose solemn function has always been to tackle the problem of human well-being, stands face to face with many a fresh complicated phenomenon that,

the altered condition of international life has brought into being. Every student of history is aware that two schools of thought have always stood side by side—one is the materialistic school of philosophy that appraises the values of life from the standpoint of its material advancement and emphasises the need of scientific manipulation of the material forces to multiply human happiness in the world. The West has been a staunch adherent of this school of thought, and today the spirit of competition has been carried so far in the various spheres of life that it has once more threatened the peace of the world as it had done so many times in the past. Whereas the other school—the school of the East—has stepped beyond the dead wall of material phenomena to 'plumb life's dim propound' and realised the true import and significance of the life eternal and placed the transcendent truth before humanity as the only solvent and determinant of human destiny. The Vedanta Kesari that enters today upon the sixteenth year of its existence has tried during this period to carry the message of harmony and peace to the earnest seekers of truth and has succeeded in no small measure in influencing human relations by an inculcation of the catholic and universal principles of the Vedanta. The magnitude of the task it has undertaken can hardly be realised unless the actualities are squarely faced. With the roll of years fresh problems are cropping up only to intensify the complexity of life. To place, therefore, before mankind an ideal that must comprehend all the aspects of human existence and effectively grapple with the living concerns of nations is surely one of the most stupendous of all human tasks. On the eve of this New Year we offer our salutations to the Lord and pray with all humility for strength and courage to cope with the sacred task and carry on our message of good will and peace to all irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality. We take this opportunity as well to offer our cordial greetings to our readers, sympathisers and friends whose loving co-operation has stood us in great stead in every field of our activity. We sincerely believe that we shall also in future enjoy their ungrudging help and good wishes as we have hitherto done in the discharge of our sacred function.

The problems of the modern world have grown up to such huge proportions that they seem to defeat all human efforts for solution. To tackle the modern conditions of life with any amount of success one must have a critical study and analysis of the historical phenomena of the past and the present. History, as every one knows, is one of the most powerful moulding factors in the life of the nations. History has been a faithful record of the functionings of the living social organisms of the different ages from the earliest times, and even now stands as an eloquent interpreter to the intelligent souls of the

forces working towards the evolution of social order and the promotion of better understanding between man and man, nation and nation. But on the contrary it has also been urged that history is an unmitigated curse to humanity in as much as 'it keeps alive the memory of old enemies better dead, teaching that because a thing has been, therefore it always shall be; a sort of malignant old man of the sea, clinging to our shoulders and preventing us from moving to new and better things.' The history books should, in their opinion, be consumed in one vast *auto-da-fe* as did the Chinese First Emperor who wishing a new era to begin with himself, burnt all books in which were inscribed the annals of the past! But it must not be forgotten that it is not history which is the enemy of mankind but a mistaken and imperfect reading thereof. Our task is therefore not to destroy the most fascinating and humane of all studies but to understand its true implications so as to widen instead of to narrow sympathies—to find out the pervasive truth that has ever since guided the destiny of man. Unfortunately our imagination has become too dwarfed to stretch over the shining centuries of the past and cull the lessons history teaches from its pages rich with the spoils of time. It is therefore highly necessary that we should begin to study anew the history of the human race with all its synthetic bearings; for the proper study of history, says Mr. Eileen Power, must leave the student with a sense of community which is confined neither to his own class nor to his own nation, but explains his environment to every citizen of the world and thus makes him consider himself as part and parcel of humanity at large. This mentality is indeed the result of a true study of history, for it widens the visions of man and ultimately embarks him on a life that embraces the entire mankind in its catholic sweep. Rightly has Mr. Wells remarked: "There can be no common peace and prosperity without common historical ideas, and consciousness of a common history is one of the most potent of unifying agents." In fact in all our tall talks about peace and good will we studiously ignore the true lessons and implications of history and consciously or unconsciously forge new fetters for ourselves as well as for others in the sacred name of brotherhood and peace!

The craving for peace is imbedded in the very nature of man; and the philosophy of the different races is a living record of the struggle of the human mind to evolve out principles to cater to the peace and happiness of individuals as well as of nations. It is therefore no wonder that even in the midst of the clash and clatter of arms, a cry for peace would well up from the inmost depth of the human soul, and persistent attempts would be made to sing permanent truce to wars and battles. The modern world is astir with the question of

peace, and pact after pact is being formulated to cry halt to the orgy of bloodshed and violence. A careful analysis of the historical events of the European world shows that similar attempts were made by the ancient Greeks for world unity and their works were more or less based upon intellectual grounds. Their influence reached the world outside through the Romans and the Christian Church, and since the Renaissance, through all the leading ideas in art, philosophy and science. The Romans following in the wake of the Greeks contributed not a little to the fostering of a spirit of unity. Reason was conceived by them to be the basic ground for world-harmony; for reason, they argued, proclaimed that only by common action and community of thought could the growing variety and richness of human life be developed towards its natural end which the Greeks were the first to discern in the Western world. In the middle ages the conception of international life was all the more widened and it manifested a tendency to transcend the narrow bounds of race or nationality. It was eventually intensified by the forces of the French Revolution that asserted the equality of men and declared each one of them regardless of birth, colour or religion to be possessed of inalienable rights. And the ringing sentences in which Jefferson proclaimed the rights of man and of the people of America may be said to record the highest watermark the forces of European culture reached in the process of its evolution.

But how is it that inspite of such persistent attempts for world unity since the days of Greco-Roman civilisation the problem stands even now as enigmatic as before? What are then the reasons that have stood as insurmountable barriers in the way of attainment of the highest common measure of agreement among the different nations of the world? The efforts of the peace-makers of the present day, no less than those of the ancient and the medieval times have, to say the least, proved quite nugatory. The modern conception of 'nationalism' has moreover given an utter lie to the forces brought on the stage of human affairs by the French Revolution. "The schools of all European countries at the present time", says Mr. Wells, "teach the most rancid patriotism; they are centres of malignant political infection. The children of Europe grow up with an intensity of national egotism that makes them, for all practical purposes, insane." Thus time has totally narrowed down that professed idealism into rabid Jingoism which is antithetic to the growth of an international mind or universal brotherhood. To crown all, the world is vibrant with the solemn notes of Western Imperialism and all sacred professions of liberty, equality and fraternity have got inextricably sunk in the morass of commercial life. The reason for this tragic sequence in the history of European civili-

sation is indeed not far to seek. For there is evidently a woeful lack of proper recognition of the spiritual values of life in the Western idealism and this has more or less taken away from that cohesive force which is sorely needed to unify all disruptive elements and to rally them on a common platform. Rightly did Dr. Rabindranath remark in one of his speeches at the Imperial University of Tokyo: "The political civilisation which has sprung from the soil of Europe and is over-running the whole world, like some political weed is based upon *exclusiveness*. It is always watchful to keep the aliens at bay.....It is always afraid of other races achieving eminence, naming it as a peril and tries to thwart all symptoms of greatness outside its own boundaries, forcing down races of men who are weaker, to be eternally fixed in their weakness.....This political civilisation is scientific, not human.....It betrays its trusts, it enshrines gigantic idols of greed in its temples, taking great pride in the costly ceremonials of its worship, calling this patriotism. And it can safely be prophesied that this cannot go on." In fact the old Greco-Roman ideas that worked as formative forces in the world of European politics towards the creation of an international outlook have received a serious setback at the hands of the modern imperialists. And the signs of the times warrant us to believe that inspite of sweet and seasoned words of peace and equality, the imperialistic tendencies are daily growing by leaps and bounds and receiving a solid support in the actions of all the great powers of the world.

Various devices have up till now been resorted to in big political circles for the furtherance of the cause of peace. The activity of the Holy Alliance of the 19th century to maintain the integrity of political interests at the expense of weaker nationalities is still a history of recent memory. The League of Nations is the result of another gigantic effort for peace among the great powers of the world and every one knows how ineffectual do the blatant injunctions of the League prove when a nation's interests, commercial or political, are least affected. The world has of late made much of the 'noble' performance of M. Briand, Kellog and Austen Chamberlain, and has hailed the three 'peace-makers' as the greatest benefactors of humanity! Almost all the great powers including the Dominions and Dependencies have ratified the treaty and thereby lent their support to the Anti-war Paper Pact. But it must be interesting to know that America the arch-angel of this message of peace has just after the ratification of the treaty become much more engaged than before in making adequate preparation for war! The Fifteen Cruiser Bill has of late been passed by the Senate and 'a war with all its implications between England and America is not any more unthinkable today.....

The countries know fully well that they have to face this situation within the near future, and are making their plans accordingly.' The American Senate has already challenged the British command of the Seas and has demanded that even the neutrals must enjoy the right to trade with whatever nations they please without any interference from any sea power. Really 'it seems to be a case of approving the dove of peace and then welcoming the god of war'. Even Signor Mussolini while styling the Kellog Pact as transcendental, consciously or unconsciously blurts out the whole secret when he says: "They must have no illusions about the political state of Europe. When a storm is approaching everybody talks of peace. They do not want to disturb the European equilibrium but they must be ready. Nobody ought to be astounded if he called on the nation to make another sacrifice so that all their forces on sea, land and air, might be perfected!" The Armistice Day Address of President Coolidge is all the more interesting. "All human experience," said the President, "seems to demonstrate that a country that makes a reasonable preparation for defence is less likely to be subject to a hostile attack and less likely to suffer a violation of its rights which might lead to war. This is the prevailing attitude of the United States and one which I believe should constantly determine its action. To be ready for defence is not to be guilty of aggression. We can have military preparation without assuming a military spirit. It is our duty to ourselves and to the cause of civilisation, to the preservation of domestic tranquillity, to our orderly and lawful relations with foreign peoples, to maintain an adequate Army and Navy." In fact it has become the fashion of the day to talk of peace with war at the throat of other peoples. Rumblings of an approaching storm are being heard from all quarters of the globe and mighty preparations for self-defence and aggression as well as for keeping the subject races under the perpetual yoke of political thralldom are actively on foot. The relation between England and Russia, not to speak of British attitude towards Germany, Afganistan, Turkey and Persia, is one of deep-seated jealousy and suspicion. The recent developments in European politics betoken a strained relation between France and Italy. Japan is no doubt sitting on the fence but her commercial policy has been one of aggression and expansion, and as such is likely to clash with that of America and England. In view of the standing political condition of Modern Europe even an out-and-out optimist can hardly persuade himself to believe that the attitude of the British is in any sense favourable to the idea of 'practical disarmament'. And it is not an exaggeration to say that since 1914 inspite of vast volumes of pious intention hardly anything of practical value has been done to prevent future wars.

And yet we are every day being entertained from the platform and the press with highly seasoned homilies of peace and good will! Is it not a deliberate insult to the intelligence of humanity to talk of peace in season and out of season when every great power has been developed or is in a process of being developed into a huge gun-powder magazine ready to burst at the slightest spark of injured interest and when more than half the world are still being trodden rough-shod under the iron heels of European Imperialism and debarred from the enjoyment of elementary rights of man? The so-called evangelists of peace are proclaiming their gospel of freedom and equality on the one hand and forging new instruments on the other to stifle the quivering aspirations of the subject people! There is consequently an unusual stir and unrest all over the world, and this talk of peace without the necessary mental turn-over has served only to intensify human discontent and disgust.

Experiment after experiment was made in the past and is still being made in the modern world for inaugurating peace among mankind. But the history is a living witness to how all such attempts have ended in a huge fiasco. The European civilisation, as it stands to-day, is itself a deterrent force in the consummation of the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. Imperialism negatives the very idea of equality and cannot concede any such right to other powers however vaunted its professions may be. "The masses even are everlastingly duped, everlastingly martyred; they pay for others' misdeeds. Above their heads are exchanged challenges for causes of which they know nothing and for stakes which are of no interest to them. Across their backs takes place the struggle of ideas and of millions, while they themselves have no more share in the former than in the latter. For their part they do not hate. They are the sacrifice." As a matter of fact the spirit of combativeness has absolutely blinded these power-intoxicated imperialists to the true vision of life as well as to the line on which the human society should advance. Lately one member of the British Parliament, Lieut. Commander Kenworthy, in his book, "Will Civilisation Crash?" has suggested that the United States, Great Britain, Holland and Switzerland could prohibit war to all the rest of the world if they choose. For between them "they control the finance of the whole world. No nations breaking the peace could hope for any financial help against their combined boycott.....Without money, oil, cotton, wool, rubber, copper, zinc, jute, tin or edible fats, no war on the modern scale could be waged for very long. A very large proportion of the meat and wheat of the world would also be controlled by this group of peace-makers....." The writer anticipates in a mood of self-

complacency a union of America, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, France and Germany without actually facing the real issue. Is such a union at all possible without a surrender of independent action and the raising of the commonsense of those communities to the level of realising the amount of sacrifice involved? Economic interest is too powerful a wedge between nation and nation to allow a speedy rapprochement to fructify among the powers under the existing circumstances. And it is needless to state that unless people are prepared to accept the idea that the economic life of the world can be regarded and controlled as *one* system to the general advantage of the race their aspirations for universal peace will remain the most unreal of all possible aspirations. Separate economic systems must compete, must jostle, must forestall, and must drive, for all their virtuous protestations, towards a tussle.

In fact the armoury of European politics has been emptied of its contents in the sacred name of peace and goodwill. And in the light of the experience we have gathered from the congregated historical phenomena of the Occidental world, we can emphatically assert that this world would ever remain a hellish theatre of militant nationalism unless the culture of the East comes to its rescue. For, "the completest happiness which can accrue to man henceforward will be derived from the intelligence of mankind as a whole, and from the multiple ways which man has discovered of attaining happiness.....For a long time to come, the intensest joy which man can know on earth, will be derived from *supplementing the ideals of Europe by the ideals of Asia*,"—says M. Romain Rolland in the Forerunners. And it is indeed in the East, especially in India that the ultimate principle on which world unity is to be broadbased was first discovered. It is only the discerning minds that have already recognised the truth. India—the homeland of spirituality—has always occupied the status of the Teacher of humanity in religion and various other branches of knowledge. The great philosopher Mr. Cousin truly says: "When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monument of the East, especially those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discern there so many truths, and truths so profound and standing in so strong a contrast with those mean results which in these later days have satisfied European genius that we are tempted to bow the knee before the genius of the East, and see in that cradle of mankind the true home of philosophy." The European culture has taught the people to think in terms of the people of France, the people of England, the people of Germany, and so forth, and has thereby falsified all their professions of brotherhood and stood in the way of development of an international mind. But the glory

of Indian philosophy and culture lies in the recognition of the oneness of humanity, the unity of soul—the very democratic principle that eliminates all invidious distinction between man and man, nation and nation. There can absolutely be no room for the concession of equal rights and privileges to all irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality, unless the fundamental unity of the universe and for the matter of that, of humanity is recognised. The Vedanta has been proclaiming this lofty idealism from time immemorial and in this present age when the need for it has been most urgently felt, it has come out with all the majesty and force of its universal principles and spiritual outlook to toll a death-knell to the conflicting interests of men and to furnish the basic ground for the establishment of human brotherhood on earth.

Many great minds have grown weary of competition, this struggle and brutality of this commercial civilisation and they are looking forward towards something better and nobler. 'Modern Christianity has utterly failed to satisfy the pressing needs of the age and the thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, especially in the Vedanta, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink for which they are hungering and thirsting.' Swami Vivekananda pointed out in one of his lectures in India that the whole Western civilisation would crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there were no spiritual foundation. "The rational West," he said, "is earnestly bent upon seeking out the rationality, the *raison d'être* of all its philosophy and ethics.....They want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the Infinite Reality, that exists in you and in me and in all, in the self, in the soul. The infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, —that you and I are not only brothers but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality. Europe wants it to-day just as much as our down-trodden masses do." And it is not an exaggeration to state that unless this great principle is allowed to govern all the thoughts and activities of these so-called peace-maker of the world and unless all the social and political aspirations of humanity are moulded and shaped in the light of this Vedantic conception of the oneness of humanity, all attempts for peace, however organised they may be, must prove futile. Diplomacy and political camouflage can never adjust human relations and bestow lasting peace on mankind. Monsieur Clemenceau, one of the political veterans of France disgusted with politics speaks out from his retirement

at the ripe old age of 80 in the utmost agony of his soul: "No more of politics; don't talk of them. What does a man get out of it but ingratitude and grey hairs? Look at me for instance. Politics is a curseOnce for all I want to tell you that I am through with politics. Some people think there is glory in it. I will tell you what it is, politics. It's rhubarb. Americans call it apple sauce. I call it rhubarb. Because rhubarb is worse." What a sweeping indictment against political life by a soul who has grown grey in it! Is it not still time that in the interest of peace and well-being of society, the entire mentality should be changed and orientated to the lofty idealism of the East? Mr. Eileen Power's suggestions for the promotion of such a sense of brotherhood among men are indeed worthy of attention: "A sense of the solidarity of mankind is stimulated by the teaching of world history as well as by an insistence throughout upon social history.....Social history necessarily lays more stress than does political history upon the likeness of nations, upon their independence, upon the debts which the civilisation of each owes to that of others." He further adds that every one must be taught to treat a country not as an isolated planet moving through space and at intervals colliding disastrously with other planets; but as part of a whole in which other nations are also parts. Besides, there must be a direct teaching in internationalism. "We have, for example," says he, "our Empire Day. Why not also our Humanity Day, celebrating not merely the great soldiers and sailors, who have been the glory of our nation, but all the greatmen who have conquered nature or disease, created beauty or won knowledge for the service of mankind?"

These are indeed some of the most practical suggestions coming from the pen of one whom the study of history with all its bearings has enabled to rise above all racial or national prejudices and to embrace humanity as his own. History, as already stated, is one of the most humane of all studies, and as long as humanity shall last, it, if properly studied, shall continue to exercise its wholesome influence upon the affairs of man. Is it not a pity that a boy or a girl who can reel off a long list of the wives of Henry VIII or of a host of other political figures of the different nationalities, stands sadly nonplussed when he or she is asked to name the historic figures—the figures that have proved real benefactors of humanity in every age and clime—the heroes who command the unstinted homage and admiration of humanity at large? The names of Machiavelli or Black Prince, Charlemagne or Saladin, Napoleon or Metternick are of far deeper interest to every student of history than those of Erasmus or Galileo, Froebell or Tolstoy, Buddha or Lao Tze! And the reason is not far to seek.

This attitude of mind has been developed through a long-standing educational policy that has subordinated the spiritual aspect of life to the material interests of the people. And it is a sad truth that a mental turnover cannot be expected to dawn all at once unless the human mind is trained to comprehend the spiritual values of human existence; for it is only this kind of education that would emancipate the vision of man from its narrow surroundings, raise him far above the pettiness of racialism and teach him to think and feel himself to be an integral part of entire humanity. The Indian culture, ever since the dawn of its history, has accentuated this lofty principle and has again stood before the world with all its grace and beauty to spiritualise human relations. To bring about a fresh start, to ensure the growth of an international mind, there must be renewed awakening of energy, vigorous upheavals which stimulate the will and break all obstacles into smithereens. Both the East and the West need such an awakening to the spiritual ideal; for to talk of peace and brotherhood without their proper implications is nothing short of blasphemy.

Some great minds have already shaken of their age-worn conceptions of human progress and have caught glimpses of a coming dawn of real peace and world unity on a basis of spiritual idealism. For says Romain Rolland: "Amid the warfare of the nations are being laid the foundations of spiritual peace between the nations like a light-house which reveals to widely separated vessels the distant haven where they will anchor side by side. The human mind has reached the gateway leading into a new road. The gateway is too narrow, and people are crushing one another as they endeavour to get through. But beyond it I see stretching the broad highway along which they will move and where there is room for all. Amid the encircling horrors, the vision comforts me. My heart suffers, but my spirit sees the light." If we really be sincere and act upon the universal spiritual ideal for the achievement of common good, the dreams of such visionaries, however chimerical they may seem at the present day, must materialise into action at no distant future. The human energy that is constantly being dissipated after the pursuit of material good and political rivalry, stands in the need of being mobilised and concentrated upon the ideal of common peace and happiness. Neither diplomacy nor political hypocrisy has any scope in the sacred task of peace-making. It is only sincerity and sacrifice that must be the guiding force in the re-shaping of human destiny. And if we sincerely crave for peace and harmony, equality and fraternity, we must develop an international mind through the assimilation of the sacred lessons the history teaches to mankind. Let the League or the Pact-makers profit by the teachings of history and guide and shape

their aspirations accordingly. And we doubt not if history is studied with its deeper implications and the peace-makers take full cognisance of the spiritual values of life in all their schemes for the adjustment of human relations, the question of peace and brotherhood would no long be the figment of an idle brain but be a *fait accompli* at no distant date.

SPIRITUALITY AND THE PROBLEM OF BREAD

By K. C. R.

Many a reader may be surprised at the title of this article. Nothing seems to be more vulgar than to talk of bread in discussing matters spiritual. Has it not been said that money is the root of all evil and that the first duty of all spiritually minded people is to turn away from all thoughts of bread? Yet one should do well to remember the beautiful parable in the Upanishads wherein a great truth is brought home to Svetaketu by means of fasting. Svetaketu did not take any food for full fifteen days and then went to his father who asked him to recite the Rik, Yajus and Sama Mantrams. "They do no longer reveal themselves to me," said Svetaketu. Then his father asked him to take some food. Svetaketu did so and came back to his father. Now he could solve every problem which his father wanted him to solve. Thus the father illustrated to Svetaketu the close interrelation between physical nourishment and the powers of the mind. When we talk of a people or of humanity, we are always concerned with "embodied" souls. So in discussing spirituality in relation to a people or a nationality, it would not be quite correct to ignore entirely the material cage in which the soul is imprisoned for the time being at any rate. It may net therefore be so fantastic to correlate spirituality with the problem of the bread. It has been said that the poverty of the poor is, in a quite literal sense, their destruction. "The study of the causes of poverty," wrote the great economist Marshall, "is the study of the causes of the degradation of a large part of mankind." It is admitted on all hands that India is at present one of the poorest countries in the world. It exports coolies to bear the whiteman's burden of 'opening' and 'developing' new countries—it is the country where half the population live beneath the subsistence level and where famine and epidemics take the maximum toll. What has been the result of this extreme poverty? Has it or has it not degraded the whole population? Some people seem to have doubts about it. There are many who think that India is the ancient home of spirituality—that though the people may have lost economic prosperity, the moral and spiritual wealth is ever on the

increase. Have not our ancient sages preached with fervour the ideal of poverty? Has it not been said that the men who wear loin cloth are the only happy men on the face of the earth? So, if 150 million people are able to put on only loin cloth and can provide only one or half a meal a day (albeit it be by necessity and not by choice), has there not been a real *en masse* achievement of spirituality? The answer is most decisively in the negative. Spirituality, if anything, must be indicative of strength—it must signify the power to rise above all temporal powers and not be crushed under them. Yet it is the latter that is happening in India, however much we may boast of our spiritual superiority over the West. If you consider the masses, they are simply being ground between the nether stone of ignorance and superstition and the upper stone of exploitation by the few. The economic condition of the masses is becoming worse day by day. This is not mere conjecture as some die-hard official economists would have us believe. Prof. C. N. Vakil lately proved in the columns of the *Young India* that according to all statistical calculations the economic condition of the country is steadily deteriorating. Where is the spirituality in a people who cannot clothe and feed themselves, who have to spend their meagre income on toddy and hemp to forget the miseries of their existence?

The plight of the English-educated few amongst the Indians is no better than that of the illiterate masses. The following appeared in the *Statesman* of March 29, 1928. *Young Bengali's Tragic Death: Unemployment Echo*:—"A pathetic story was told at the Coroner's Court in connexion with an inquest into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mrityunjay Sil (30), of Rambagan Branch Lane, Calcutta, of opium poisoning on March 14. It was stated that Mrityunjay lost his employment shortly after his marriage about a year ago. He went out daily in search of a job but in vain. In the meantime, the family, which was large, was faced with starvation and every day his mother pressed him to secure employment. After some time, he began to go out daily at 10 o'clock and return at 6, giving his mother to understand that he had obtained a situation. As a matter of fact, he had spent this period in making an unsuccessful hunt for employment. On March 14, he was found lying ill in his room. He could hardly speak but his mother gathered from him that he had taken opium. He was immediately removed to hospital where he died shortly after his admission. A letter was found in his handwriting, which contained the confession that, having failed to secure employment and being unable to bear the sight of his family's privations, he had poisoned himself. A verdict of suicide was returned." This account appeared in an

obscure corner of a daily newspaper; but probably it does give a better idea of the actual condition of the middle classes than the most sombre array of statistics. Just as one single tumour may be the outward indication of the poisoning of the whole organic system, so one single suicide of the above description may be the indication of a malady that is eating into the vitals of our social system. The unfortunate fact is it not only 'may be' but actually 'is'. If there was one Mrityunjay who actually committed suicide, there are thousands of Mrityunjays who think that life is an unbearable burden—who have neither the courage to live nor the courage to die. Our condition is one of "death in life" in the words of Coleridge or one of Living Death in the words of Mahatma Gandhi. One fails to see any spirituality in this condition—it is neither spirituality nor materialism, it is "Tamas" pure and simple.

What then must we do? If the people are to regain their powers of the body, of the mind and of the spirit, they must have food to eat. Again, this food was snatched away from their mouth because they had lost all spiritual and physical qualities. Verily, we are in the midst of a most vicious circle a people could ever be in. Poverty, moral degradation, foreign subjugation have all combined to form a morass in which the whole population is sinking deeper and deeper. There is a class of people who think that no improvement is possible till the country has shaken off the foreign yoke. Everything depends on the solution of the political question. On the other hand one can as well argue that it is impossible to improve the political condition unless there is an intense desire in the hearts of the whole population for the attainment of freedom. This desire cannot grow unless and until the people possess a minimum standard of education, morality and economic well-being. The saddest tragedy of an ignorant life is that the sufferer himself can never realise the misery of it—he can never perceive the necessity of a change. Again, there is no courage and dash in a people living below the subsistence level, and even if they have momentary visions of freedom, they cannot overcome their lethargy and work incessantly for the attainment of the goal. The situation is thus a most complex and critical one. There is obviously an impasse.

When such a crisis faces a nation, there is but one remedy. That remedy is to appeal to the God in man to rouse himself to dispel doubt and despair. The fall of the people began with the loss of spirituality. A false ideal of worldly renunciation did also probably play an important part. The philosophy of inaction or turning away from the weary walk of life found a most ready response in the hearts of

men whom a tropical and enervating climate does incessantly incline towards passivity and idleness. To fight this deadly disease nothing is more necessary than a preaching of the philosophy of Action or Karma Yoga. The great and eternal truths that impart strength and courage must be taught anew so as to breathe new fire and glow in the dying embers of spirituality in the people. Preaching from the texts is of no use; preaching to be of any use must be done through life. This preaching has already begun and we can already see the new ferment in national life. Those who think that religion has no place in politics hold an absurd position. If the body is already in bondage what is it that must revolt and throw off the yoke? It is undoubtedly the spirit. The soul is always free, and it can as well free the body whenever it wants to. Soul force is the ultimate force that overcomes all resistance. So, awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached.

INDIAN METAPHYSICS

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

CHAPTER I: Introduction

"How charming is divine philosophy!

Not harsh and crabbed as some dull fools suppose,

But musical as is Apollo's lute.

And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets where no crude surfeit reigns."—Milton.

No subject in the world is or can be more fascinating than a study of the evolution of Indian Metaphysics. To Indian philosophy may well be applied the description regarding the Mahabharata: What is elsewhere is here and what is not here is nowhere else;—यदिहास्ति तद्व्यतः यन्नहोऽस्ति न तत्कचित्. Indian philosophy is subtle enough to task the acutest minds and has at the same time a practical and pragmatic value as it is well and wisely related to ethics and religion. Professor Das Gupta says well: "Philosophy owes its origin to the deep-seated human longing after some transcendent finality and philosophy must be expected to satisfy this longing by ennobling and elevating humanity to its high moral and spiritual destiny." This function is most amply fulfilled by Indian philosophy. We can realise this if we have a grip of its central doctrines and see the wonderful pageant of its procession through the ages. Its bewildering variety which is however only the rich blossoming of a

central unity of life, its history extending over millennia, and its subtlety and complexity are such as may well daunt the most subtle and soaring intellects. It has of late been studied and expounded by many able men without and within India. This is a suitable occasion to sum up the studies of Indian Metaphysics and present in a brief form its orderly evolution.

The Indian philosophy, like the fabled Minerva of Greek mythology, was born in full panoply and with regal mien. It was the science of sciences (*adhyatma vidya vidyanam*—as the Gita says) and was the sun of the solar system of the Indian culture. It was a home-grown plant and was not a borrowed possession. Its distinction was that it was in vital alliance with religion and with ethics, and profoundly affected individual and social life. It sought the inner light and then, having found it, illumined by its aid the outer life. It has been decried as it is not pure speculation and has set pragmatic and spiritual values before its gaze. But it seems to me that this trait is not strength and not its weakness. In India philosophy is not a theory but is a *sadhana*. It has been further said that it is pessimistic. This again is an unfounded charge. Professor Bosanquet says: "I believe in optimism but I add that no optimism is worth its salt that does not go all the way with pessimism and arrive at a point beyond it." It is in this sense that Indian philosophy is pessimistic and yet optimistic. Professor Das Gupta has well shown "this optimistic nature of the Indian temperament". It alone has realised and revealed the core of Ananda (Bliss) in the sheath of evanescence.

Thus Indian Metaphysics is rooted in morality and blossoms in philosophic truth and bears the fruit of God-realisation. Morality and philosophy and religion are various aspects of at-one-ment with the universe. Philosophy deals with universal values, and Religion deals with absolute values and reveals the relation of souls and the universe to the First and Supreme Causes of All and links them up to Him in the unity of love or in perfect identity. Thus metaphysics is the liberator of the Infinite in the Finite. The Bible says: "Know the Truth and the Truth will make you free." I shall show how this function is adequately performed by Indian Metaphysics.

CHAPTER II : The Sources of Indian Metaphysics

The eternal source of Indian Metaphysics is the Eternal Veda. It is not necessary for me to go in this work into the vexed question about the date of the Veda. Max Muller says: "Every verse, nay every word in them, is an authentic document in the history of the greatest empire, the empire of the human mind, as established in the second millennium B.C." The researches of Lokamanya B. G. Tilak

have pushed back the date by some more millennia. As I am concerned only with the metaphysical ideas, it is enough for me to state here that the Hindus believe the Vedas to be the eternal scripture and to have been taught by God for the salvation of humanity.

The Vedas

Though to the Western *savants* and critics the Vedas are the babblings of infant humanity groping towards the light, the Hindu thinkers as well as the ordinary Hindu people have regarded the Vedas as revelation and the Vedic sages as the revealers of the Eternal Truth and the transmitters of the eternal tradition. An exposition of orthodox Hindu philosophy will be incomplete if this view of the authority of *Sabda* or *Sruti*, i.e., the Vedas is ignored or is damned with faint praise. The Hindu philosophers alone have been able to reconcile revelation and reason and thus a rational account of revelation and a revelatory view of the real place of reason in life and superlife.

In regard to the religion of the Rig Veda we have had a great deal of mutually destructive interpretations. Some savants call it the worship of the powers of Nature. Some call it "an allegorical representation of the attributes of the Supreme Deity." Yet others seek to find secret doctrines and mystic philosophies there. The key to the Rig Veda must be sought within itself and in the Upanishads and it is indisputably apparent there. The Rig Veda declares in I, 164, 46: *एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति*.—(It is one: The sages describe it variously). It is the various partial manifestations of the Supreme Godhead—whether they are thirty three or more—that are hymned in the Rig Veda while the Upanishads reveal the nature and essence of the Supreme Godhead.

Dr. Radakrishnan and others follow the Western savants in calling the Vedic sages as primitive poetic souls. No one can disprove such a theory but it would have been in a book by an Indian philosopher to affirm that all schools of Indian philosophy unite in regarding the sages as the seers and revealers of Eternal Truth. The Rig Veda reveals according to them not "the process of God-making in the factory of man's mind" but the process of the self-revelation of God to man through the eternal sounds of scriptures. The Rig Veda reveals not polytheism or syncretism or henotheism (a word coined by Professor Max Muller) but the highest aspects of the Hindu religion in all its compositeness, though the systematisations of the religion came later on. We find in it not merely monotheism but monism, i.e., the realisation of the Blissfull Absolute which is the Oversoul of all. Human thought has not yet climbed higher than the height of the

golden declaration—एकं सद्ब्रह्म बहुधा वदन्ति. Professor MaxMuller has well said in his Six Systems of Indian Philosophy: "In fact, the Vedic poets had arrived at a conception of the Godhead which was reached once more by some of the Christian philosophers at Alexandria, but which even at present is beyond the reach of many who call themselves Christians."

In the Vedas we find clear references to the caste system and to the doctrines of Karma and Metempsychosis, and to the doctrines of Heaven and Hell, though it is the fashion of Western savants and their Eastern followers and admirers to deny these palpable facts. I have dealt with these questions elsewhere and refrain from going into them here from fear of undue elaboration. Dr. Radakrishnan and other scholars in India subscribe to the theories propounded by Western scholars about these matters, about Aryans and Dasyus, and about other matters of Western speculation. Dr. Radakrishnan thinks that the Atharva Veda represents aboriginal witchcraft and demonology absorbed by the Aryan faith! To him "the religion of the Yajur Veda is a mechanical sacerdotalism." He asserts: "A rigid soul-deadening commercialist creed based on a contractual motive took the place of the simple devout religion of the Vedas." We find in his book and other modern Indian works the cheap and stale Western gibes at Brahminical priestcraft. But it is enough to say that these theories and guesses are not the Indian views. They are not the views of the great thinkers of India's past or the bulk of the thinkers in India today. All the Vedas are primarily devoted to the revelation of the Supreme realisable in nature and in man, whatever other things they contain; because they seek to meet in a manifold way the manifold needs and desires and aspirations of the human spirit. The Gita says—तैगुण्यविषया वेदाः and also वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यः—(The Vedas have the Gunas as their object; I alone am revealed by all the Vedas). After such a declaration by the divine lips, we do not want the mocking theories of mere men. I have already referred to the Rig Veda declaration and may also refer here to the Atharva Veda declaration (X, 8, 43):

"The lotus flower with nine doors,
Bound with tricoloured strands
What wonder resides within it
That the Brahman-knowers enjoy."

The Philosophy of the Upanishads

In the Upanishads we find the sublimest of the spiritual ideas of the world. They clearly proclaim the One, Eternal, Infinite Supreme Godhead and describe it in terms of fervid rapture. I shall not

discuss here whether they inculcate Monism or Dualism or Pluralism. They elaborate the great truth already declared in the Big Veda, (*Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*). They take us from the outward self to Immanence, and Transcendence and eventually to the Absolute. They lead us to a realisation of the Eternal *Sachchidananda* (Being, Consciousness and Bliss). They analyse the three recurrent states of our consciousness and show how our true self is separate from them and shines with a steady unvarying light above all limitations of time and space and causation. The self is not an emptiness or an abstraction but the deepest and widest and highest consciousness. Its immediacy in pure experience is a matter of self-realisation. The Upanishads work out clearly the concepts of Brahman and Atman. It is not possible to discuss the great *Mahavakyas* or supreme spiritual utterances contained in the Upanishads. They enable us to reach that unity which unifies and transcends the dichotomy of subject and object. This is a spiritual fact which has to be discerned and realised spiritually. *Jnana* is the name given in the Upanishads to such spiritual discernment and realisation. The Absolute cannot be reached by the senses or by the mind.

The Upanishads teach further that Brahman is both the material cause and the efficient cause of the universe. They state that "It alone existed at the beginning," that "It created Itself by itself," and that "It created the world and entered into it." The inter-relation of the real unity with the apparent plurality is brought home to us by many symbols and images in the Upanishads. No school of Hindu thought—leaving Buddhism apart—declares the world to be an illusion. The search and attainment of the Blissful Absolute is the supreme glory of the Upanishads—a glory which they share with no other sources of Truth in the universe. A. B. Keith says well in his *Sankhya System*: "The Upanishads are essentially devoted to the discovery of the Absolute, and diverse as are the forms which the Absolute may take, they do not abandon the search, nor do they allow that no such Absolute exists."

Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The Upanishads do not support an abstract conception of the ultimate reality. Their philosophy is not so much a monism as an adwaitism (not two-ness).....While it denies duality, it does not affirm that all things could be dissolved into one except in a figurative sense." This shows as much confusion of thought and language as the great scholar Thibaut's statement in his translation of the Vedanta Sutras that there are passages in the Upanishads "whose decided tendency is to represent Brahman as transcending all qualities, as one undifferentiated mass of impersonal intelligence." Brahman is not regarded as an abstraction or as a mass

of undifferentiated intelligence in the Upanishads at all. The highest Upanishadic thought does not approximate Brahman to a kind of spiritual nebula! Dr. Radhakrishnan detects some subtle difference between monism and adwaitism. On the other hand the Upanishadic declaration is *ekam eva advitiyam* (one only and without a second). There is not a mere figurative dissolution of the many into one. The affirmation of the phenomenal and relative (*vyavaharika*) reality of the many and of the absolute and noumenal reality of the One is the highest Upanishadic declaration. Brahman is One and there is nothing but Brahman. It is not correct to call it "an undifferentiated mass of impersonal intelligence." It is beyond all names and forms and transcends the categories of space and time and causation. But it is not an abstraction, because it is a realisation and whatever is a realisation cannot be called a mere abstraction. There is a stage or plane or level or type or grade of experience which is beyond what is known as the *Tripiti* or Triad of Knower, Knowledge, and Known. We must use in regard to it any words which savour of the phenomenal world. The nearest approach to a description of its nature and being is contained in the famous description *Sachchidananda*. It is clear that Dr. Radhakrishnan and others are raising and laying a ghost when they intend that Brahman is an abstraction. Dr. Radhakrishnan is involved in a hopeless attempt to reconcile Vedanta and Bergsonism in an illogical manner by saying that "within the Absolute we have real growth, creative evolution" (Volume I, page 198). The doctrine of the experience as the One Self is not pantheism because pantheism excludes transcendence; it is not idealism but it does not say that the world is a mental creation but affirms the relative and phenomenal reality of mind and matter and declares also that the Absolute is above and beyond mind and matter and is the one and only true existence; it is not correctly describable as monism, because this word has become associated with the theory that the universe is an evolution of a material substance whose derivatives are matter and mind. It affirms that there is a supreme plane of absolute realisation of the One Brahman as *Sachchidananda*. I shall go more fully into this question later on in this work.

Let no one imagine for a moment that such an exalted view of reality could find no place for devotion or duty or altruism. The Upanishads are the source of all the *mantras* and the cults of later Hinduism and emphasise in unmistakable terms the need for adoration of God and the imperativeness of His Grace. They declare also that only one who is sinless and who is pure and devoted to his duty and who lives a life of service and self-sacrifice and renunciation can attain true devotion to God and reach that high

level of Jnana or meditation and wisdom which will bring to us the realisation of the Absolute. Dr. Radhakrishnan says well: "The ideal of ethics is Self-realisation." Let no one stigmatise this view as selfishness. The self meant in the phrase "Self-realisation" is that supreme height of being which is the culmination of all purity, all love, and all wisdom. Morality is thus a means and not an end—a noble means to the noblest end. Dr. Radhakrishnan says well: "A life of reason is a life of unselfish devotion to the world." I would add that a life of unselfish devotion to the world leads to a life of unselfish devotion to God which leads to a life of ceaseless meditation on God which leads to the highest realisation of God as Self and of Self as God. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The end of religion is the transcendence of religion. Ideal religion overcomes the duality with which it starts. Religious worship starts with fear, passes through reverence, love and communion with the eternal, and culminates in the ecstatic life, where God and the soul melt into each other. Religious worship has to be accepted until the perfect condition is reached." The perfection is in the *turiya* state or the state of transcendental intuition where we realise the Absolute. This state is apprehended in dim and imperfect way in the following fine passage in Baron Von Hegel's *Eternal Life*, where he speaks of trance conditions "which appear to the experiencing soul, in proportion to their concentration, as timeless, *i.e.*, as non-successive, simultaneous, hence as *eternal*... The eternity of the soul is not here a conclusion drawn from the apparent God-likeness in other respects, of the soul when in this condition, but the eternity, on the contrary, is the very centre of the experience itself, and is the chief inducement to the soul for holding itself to be divine. The soul's immortality cannot be experienced in advance of death, whilst its eternity, in the sense indicated, is or seems to be directly experienced in such 'this life' states. Hence the belief in immortality is here derivative, that in eternity is primary."

I must here stop my attempt to compress and express the wonderful doctrine of the Upanishads. Strangely enough Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "Its (Upanishad's) weakness lies in the fact that this synthesis is achieved not so much by explicit reason as by intuition." To arrive at this view after exalting intuition over reason and asserting the unfitness of reason to realise the Absolute is to let one's exposition go up like a rocket and come down like a stick. While the Upanishads are founded on the Vedic doctrines of ritual and prayer and devotion and take them towards their natural goal and fruition in the doctrine of the realisation of the Absolute, Dr. Radhakrishnan is in this fact a "temporising". He says: "They began as a movement

towards the liberation of the individual from the shackles of authority and excessive conventionalism. They ended in rivetting old chains. Instead of establishing new values for life, they tended to propagate the traditional one." This view is a mere echo of Western criticism. Dr. Radhakrishnan proceeds to say: "The lofty idealism of the Upanishads did not realise itself as a popular movement. It never influenced society as a whole.....It was an age of spiritual contradiction and chaos. The teaching of the Upanishads became so flexible as to embrace within it the most diverse forms of doctrine from a refined idealism to a crude idolatry. The result was that the higher religion was swamped by the lower." This is a thoroughly wrong and unhistorical estimate. The Upanishadic thought permeated the entire Hindu Society. There was neither contradiction nor chaos but a graduated ascent. The higher religion, instead of being swamped by the lower, sweetened and uplifted and transformed the lower.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was evidently swept out of his earlier mood by the tyranny of Western scholarship and by a love of antithesis and paradox and epigram. He says that a revolt was inevitable against the Upanishadic muddle, that the Buddhists and the Jains and the Charvakas led a kind of radical revolt while the Bhagavad Gita led a kind of conservative revolt, in the company of the later Upanishads. He says: "It may be that these radical and conservative protests against the religion as it prevailed in the post-Upanishadic period were formulated in different parts of the country, Buddhism and Jainism in the east and Bhagavad Gita in the west, the ancient stronghold of the Vedic religion. It is to this period of intellectual ferment, revolt and reconstruction that we now pass." There is a school of thinkers today who think that the future is always better than the past and the present, just as there was a school of thinkers who held that the past is greater than the present and the future. Dr. Radhakrishnan wishes to be on the side of the future as against the past. It is, first of all, incorrect history to treat the Gita as belonging to the same time as Buddhism. Further, in the life of a nation's thought there are backward as well as forward movements. Buddhism was a revolt against caste and ceremonialism and dug its own grave by attacking also the finer aspects of Vedic religion and even negating God. But the Gita is, and has always been, rightly regarded as a fulfilment and synthesis of Vedic and especially Upanishadic thought.

(To be continued)

WHERE ARE WE ?

Svami Nirlepananda

1

Tagore in one of his superb Bengali songs has very straightforwardly put the query—*Lo! the Great Day is at our doors, but where is Ind?* As a matter of fact this forms one of the most acid and crucial questions to ask ourselves at this present moment of living universal history.

From many a city political platform has this line been sung in a most touching and mournful choir-note. Amidst electricities, wirelesses, race-courses, cinemas, theatres, finely executed horse and human dances with their allied amusements, filtered tap-water, captivating trade-firms, aeroplanes, automobiles, buses, frequent panics and high-road accidents, constant commotions, mass productions, horse and electric street-cars, rickshaws, art galleries, universities, museums, Gothic arches, columns and other styles of architectural monuments, dockyards and mills, spaciouly lawned and graceful official and non-official series of buildings (leaving out of consideration of course the dirty and immoral hovels of the darkly contoured slum-quarters which are just hidden patch-spots in the moon-like faces of cities) and a constantly moving mass of temporising hotel-spenders, excitement-kept-up rabbles whose sole interest is dissipation,—one is apt to be thoroughly enchanted, *mesmerised* as it were by the magic-wand of a classical deity. The artificial glamour of a city-civilisation is apt to mislead us and bring in wrong impressions about the true state of affairs. But not certainly in all cases. It could not cheat a General Booth who had the stout heart to catch glimpses of *Darkest* England amidst the surface illuminations of British cities. He had trained his eyes to detect the reality amidst all enmeshing masquerades. That was just because he had a good amount of real *education* in him which ought to mean an expansion of heart. And his spirit worked undaunted. He was instrumental in creating all over the world gradually a net-work of institutions filled with a band of sincere, disciplined workers fired with what is now known as Salvation Army ideals and methods.

It is far from us to minimise city-workers for the uplift of the mass of sunken Indian humanity. Cities have played in our ancient culture-history quite an important part. They have been the repositories of knowledge, trade and fine arts. Outside pushes and

onward blows from their quarter have set whole villages astir. Villagers have very often received the stimulus of progressive idealism from them. Ideas have radiated and diffused from these live-barometers. Bharatavarsha's past was intimately connected and shaped by some of these famous city-centres—all very active and living factors—Purushapura, Takshashila, Mulasthanapura, Kapilavastu, Kusinara, Indraprastha, Jaipur, Ayodhya, Mathura, Brindavan, Varanashi, Prayaga, Gaya, Vaisali, Pataliputra, Kanoj, Malwa, Kamarupa, Nalanda, Champa, Tamralipta, Pratisthana, Nasik, Mangalore, Cranganore, Madura or the Southern Mathura, Kanchi, Kalyana, Badami, Mamallapura, Tamraparni—and a host of others. As a matter of fact, magnificent, *cultured* cities with a constantly moving population are not altogether new features in our land. Material improvements and a thousand and one facilities, comforts, amusements, etc., have naturally been on the increase as inevitable time-processes. As a nation we have boldly to welcome them. It would not do to nervously shake before these in unbecoming awe and stupefaction. We must practically exemplify our inner capacities for a timely adjustment before the ever increasing onrush of the outside world. If it lies within our power, let us hail the day when like modern Japan we are able to extend benefits of education, sanitation, electricity, telephone, etc., to remotest villages. That day when we will be in a position to show becoming practical concern for the uplift of the distant village ploughboy, will be decidedly a red-letter day again in our national upheaval. Each and every life has its distinct function to fulfil in the social totality. For we must not forget to remember the glory that was India's. In our present morbidity and extreme lethargic temperament we are apt to overlook the secret of India's past pre-eminence. Indian civilisation extended zealously its light and culture ages after ages successively over the Eastern Seas to Java and Borobudour (—*Vara Buddha*), to the Mediterranean seaboard, to Mesopotamia, Central and Eastern Turkistan, Khotan, Tibet, China, Japan, Korea and other lands. In all these definite points of extra-Indian territorial jurisdictions one may, if he so likes, still tap and examine the huge mass of materials,—tangible, concrete evidences unearthed, which all testify to the happy blending in the Indian temperament of a collateral, twin spirit of *intense rest* and *intense activity*. It was an undying, rare sort of union accomplished on the Indian soil. The Vedas are our sole solace so far as the prehistoric or early historic periods of the extension of Indian civilisation is concerned. For the earliest strata, linguistic evidences must suffice under present circumstances. A comparative study of Hebraic and Avestic literatures reveal points of contact. For the next age, remains of Mesopotamian

art treasures, a few fragmentary early inscriptions like that of Boghaz Kuiu, Egyptian monuments and archaeological traces, Greco-Roman literatures, Saracenic culture-monuments,—all give us distinct traces of a healthy interchange of ideas and commodities between India and abroad. Indian civilisation and culture was a unique union of the eternal polarities of life,—at one end extremely pragmatic and at another, scrupulously idealistic. Perhaps it alone amidst the brilliant galaxy of ancient races showed to humanity the necessity of utilizing to our utmost gain the respective times at our disposal by dividing and sub-dividing them arithmetically into minutest scientific units like *Palas*, *Anupalas*, *Vipalas*, *Supalas*, etc. That was for the ordinary world. For the limited few again, it taught and enunciated still fuller schemes for merging completely one's mind in an ocean of transcendental realisation beyond name, form, space and time. The Indian yogis were too cautious to throw broadcast ideas of absolute continence and renunciation all too cheaply and indiscriminately. Later Buddhism and pseudo-Vaishnavism did this mistake in the too sacred name of religion and the result was our racial downfall. Some of the ancient Eastern Empires as well as the hegemony of Rome had to dig their own graves amidst a rank moral degradation. From a particular point of view Sahajiya Buddhism and a rotten Tantrikism stand condemned in bringing about a lamentable social enervation. But so long Indian civilisation could maintain its integrity and smilingly face all manners of external attacks just because it had evolved a strong ground of excellent moral adjustment. It had put the highest credit and fame most unstintedly upon perfect morality and the ideal was ever kept at a high pitch, above everything. *Nihisreyas* or *Moksha* or *Nivritti Marga* was ever for the few. Commonly *Trivarga*—*Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama*,—the trio were to be pursued, to begin with. Swami Vivekananda clearly pointed out this distinction in his original Bengali thesis,—*The East and the West*. It is decidedly foolish or at best a very lamentable dearth of real knowledge which constantly dings into our ears that this land has been ruined for its tenets of *Vairagya*m. To a student of ancient Indian culture it is a piece of scandalous lie. Extreme slothfulness and avoidance of labour were never in India mistaken for genuine spirituality. Look at the repeated, strong counsels of Sri Krishna to Prince Arjuna to be up and doing and fight out the enemy. *Abhyudaya* or worldly pre-eminence or progress was to be pursued.

II

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From talks on towns and our race-ideals let us come down to the lower level and face real India. We cannot forget the fact that our life and blood, our real kith and kin are really in the cottages however

much we may try to avoid their contact. Our dilapidated and disease-stricken villages are no longer thriving and smiling but very fast fading and dying away before our very eyes. And we are repeating a pseudo-fatalistic philosophy. Krishna taught us *activity*. We have too easily forgotten it. The West has taken it up. For our downfall and abjectly miserable condition we are entirely to be blamed. We have allowed our fair fields to be exploited by foreigners and are now ourselves crying piteously for food. Even Western historians have informed us that as late as 1813 India maintained its fame of wealth so far as Indians themselves were concerned. In fact, it still forms the merry exploiter's raw-material-supplying arena and a much-coveted dumping ground. At the beginning of the last century the British Admiralty placed its orders for battleships at the skilful hands of Indian shipbuilders of Bombay. We leave out of count of course India's good name for being internally a veritable *El Dorado* as mentioned by ancient extra-Indian historians.

Ninety-three per cent. of India's total population live in villages. So far as Bengal is situated let us call out some staggering, statistical figures. Our study of a single province as a typical example illustrating the condition of the whole country will suffice. It will serve as a figure-post in pointing out the true track we are in. Roughly speaking the first traces of malaria in Bengal come under living old memory.

In this province ninety-three per cent. of people again depend on agriculture. The recent Tenancy legislation is of vital importance to real Bengal. According to Sir P. C. Roy it has put unjust powers at the hands of Zamindars and other middlemen. Finally, it will enhance merely the misery of the ryots. But there are also some who hold the opinion that, whatever may be the vacant and absurd dream of equalisation of property from the camp of so-called sociologists, the Bengal Tenancy Act has been after all very equitable to all impartial judges, inspite of the one-sided tenant-sponsors. Do you mean to say that the large sums invested by the Zamindars and middle classes will not fetch any preference or privilege? The hard labour of the ryot has its own value, an *immense* one, no doubt. But the financiers are not to be neglected. The preferences granted to the Zamindars, do not appear to be an injustice, when the question of transference or sale of land comes up. Our illiterate, low caste ryots very often show want of worldly wisdom. In cases of a marriage or Sradh in the family they are sometimes most thriftlessly seen to mortgage their landed properties at exorbitant interests. To spend more than what one can afford to do on such social occasions is anything but desirable. I doubt whether the unreserved right of sale of lands of all kinds

granted to the ryots by the present piece of legislation, will ultimately come to their advantage. (But by the way, much also can be said against the doctrine of eternal minordom on the part of the ryots. The right to commit mistakes paves the way sometimes to a right use of prerogatives). The Santhals and other aboriginal races have been denied such rights by the law. And it still rightly continues in vogue.

As circumstances stand now the proportion of cultivated land is per capita $1\frac{1}{2}$ Bighas. The total amount of the ryots' debts have come up to nearly sixty crores of rupees. Our average longevity is twenty-two years and seven months. Two boys out of every three have invariably some physical ailment. This is the sad extremity at which we have arrived. Out of Bengal Governments' total net income of about eleven crores nearly two crores and twenty lacs come from Excise. The educational expense per head per annum amounts to five annas and one pice, for health—three pice, for agriculture—two pice, and for industry,—one pice. The total provincial police expense comes up to nearly two crores per annum! And it is useful to remember in this connection that Bengal's total population is four crores and sixty-six lacs.

There are certain staggering disease death-toll figures. Deaths from Malaria,—two persons per minute, from Pneumonia,—one per three minutes, from Pthisis—one per four minutes, from Dysentery,—one per five minutes, from Cholera,—one per five minutes, from Puerperal diseases,—one per eight minutes, from Tetanus,—one per fifteen minutes, from Kala-Azar,—one per half an hour, from Typhoid,—one per hour.

Lengthy comments on the above are unnecessary. Let us remember comparatively with the above provincial-list some all-India figures. The chief cry of the country as a whole is—food, food! more food! Perhaps for the reason of being convinced satisfactorily of our lamentable backwardness and abject poverty the Swami Vivekananda has advised his young countrymen to go out by hundreds and thousands in order to realise where they are. And in some of his encouraging personal epistles he has profusely given vent to his full mother-heart's fill of pity and says point blank that the sole object of his western visits was to procure *roti* for his hungry countrymen in exchange for his spirituality. He does not hide his inner feelings. He boldly speaks out. Our main defect, says he, is that we have not enough to eat. Not less than forty millions of India's people (and that, important to remember, almost equalises the total population of Great Britain) do not know what is one full meal a day. Our cottage industries could not stand competition with the mass productions of

scientific factories and mills and consequently had to perish. Our mainstay now is agriculture. And it is known full well from the examples of materially advanced countries that their financial strength rests elsewhere. We know for example that only twenty-five per cent. of the national income of the United States of America come from agriculture. Again nearly sixty per cent. of our revenues are spent over India's defences. Side by side with this let us cast our eyes at other lands. The whole of India with a population of over two hundred and twenty millions spend on education only about one half of what the single State of New York spends on her one million citizens. Most shameful for us we have again created innumerable divisions in our social ranks most invidiously against all humanistic considerations. India's unsolved problem of untouchability is making itself piteously felt at every external pressure with compound interest. It is stupendously insulting to ourselves. It is our social body's sadly affected zone of moral leprosy. India's diseased mind speaks out from that quarter in dire agony. Only when we Hindus have received recently the enemy's cruel axes over our social body, we have been reminded tragically of our rank mistakes in perpetuating the untouchability problem. Many important and useful portions of ourselves have in time become positively antagonistic to the majority's welfare. If charitably treated these would have found our main bulwark. The blame is to be put on the shoulders of the higher classes. This problem is our own creation. It is one of the milestones on the road of our ruin. It has spelt ossification, atrophy, labefication—and all that. Where is the new social Archimedes who will discover a novel, health-producing way out of the present impasse and jubilantly cry *Eureka!*

Twenty-eight millions are still in the category of untouchables. The South has sinned far more than the North comparatively speaking. And it must pay. Until and unless the Pariah-electrons are totally neutralised from our social body our process of a new conversion and purging will not be complete. True that the U. S. A. with lesser population than ours, has her twelve million negroes. But the existence of evils in other lands is no ground why we should nurture them in our midst. While speaking generally, we are sinking down every moment, taken as a totality as well as in detailed national life-considerations.

The Department of Commerce in U. S. A. jubilantly announces its fuller lease of life. Figures indicate that the total wealth of U. S. A. has increased over seven-fold in the past fifty years. The number of wage-earners trebled. Since 1880, her population has

more than doubled. Individual deposits in Banks there, have increased by nearly twenty-four times and by the end 1927 the deposits amounted to the stupendous total of three hundred and twenty thousand million dollars. Last year America's foreign trade reached the highest level since 1920.

Where do we stand? Let us ask ourselves and do what lies in our power. The whole of India is not and was not and cannot be a camp of recluses. Money considerations must come when the general welfare is adjudged. In fact finance is the surest index which reveals the true state of land. As one travels from province to province and from country to country this contrast in theoretically set figures materialises and becomes obtrusively, and often sadly actual before our very eyes. And like Vivekananda it urges us to think fifty times before we advise renunciation to a mass which is extremely sunken in idleness and a poverty almost proverbial. Whenever a young man went to Sri Ramakrishna for becoming a monk he used flatly to inquire whether he had enough to eat. *Vairagya* by a famished soul is compulsory and decidedly spurious, not genuine.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Indian Teachers in China : by Phanindra Nath Bose ; published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras.

The author tries to demonstrate in this book India's relation with China, how Buddhism penetrated into China, how the Indian monks established cultural centres there, and influenced the religion and literature of that country. Not only does he give us a list of Indian Buddhist monks who preached in China, and the Sanskrit books they translated into Chinese, but also interesting biographical details with regard to some of the most important of them. These monks, by the immensity of their numbers, by the missionary zeal they evinced, and by the intellectual vigour they displayed in acquiring mastery over a language like Chinese, will surely serve as an inspiration to the present generations of India, and as eye-openers to those who entertain poor ideas about the achievements of the Indians in foreign lands.

The Doctrine of the Bhagavad-Gita : by Pandit Bhavani Shankar ; published by J. J. Vimalalal, Hummum Street, Fort, Bombay : Price As. 8.

In this booklet the author gives a clear analysis and exposition of the Bhagavad Gita and brings its difficult doctrine within the easy comprehension of all. It will be a great help to all students of this scripture.

The Wisdom of the Rishies : by T. L. Vaswani ; published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

This book by Sadhu Vaswani gives a vivid glimpse of the religious ideals that inspired the ancient seers of India. The Rishi's optimistic view of the world, arising out of his realisation of the fountain of Eternal Bliss, his reverence for the body for its being the temple of the soul, his theory of man-culture based on the idea of Atman, and his kinship with nature are some of the most striking features of this book.

A Pilgrim's Faith : by T. L. Vaswani ; published by Ganesan & Co., Madras.

The central ideas of Sadhu Vaswani's philosophy of life are presented in this book in a poetic garb. Though the writing is somewhat scrappy, it is nonetheless inspiring and attractive. A perusal of it will delight every one having a spiritual turn of mind.

The Gita and Spiritual Life : by D. S. Sarma, M.A., Professor, Presidency College, Madras ; published by the Theosophical Publishing House.

This is a collection of five lectures by the author, four of them dealing directly with the Bhagavad Gita, and the last one relating to the spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna. The book represents the Bhagavad Gita as an inspiring book on practical ethics. All through the book special emphasis is given on the Gita as a gospel of unselfish action, and there are many passages where the author seems to discourage a life of exclusive spiritual contemplation. It may be true, as the author says, that many who try to lead the latter sort of life nurse within them a disgusting sort of spiritual egotism : but it may be due to something wrong in the mentality of these men. The Bhagavad Gita does not deny the existence of such a path. On the other hand it is as much a gospel of pure spiritualism as of unselfish activity. There is however no wonder that a many sided scripture like the Gita appeals to a particular individual in one of its aspects to the exclusion of others. The book is a valuable addition to the stock of existing philosophical treatises in India and will be read with much interest and profit by every sincere seeker after truth.

The Only Path : by R. V. S. Manian ; published by "The Parasakti Ashram," Dundumitta, Periyapolaiyam P. O., Dt. Chingleput. Price As. 8.

This is a little volume with many quotations from Tamil classics. It is a useful hand-book of morals.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT THE
VEDANTA CENTRE, PROVIDENCE, U.S.A.

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Vedanta Centre, Providence, R.I., U.S.A., on the 3rd of February 1929 with due eclat. A picture of the great Swami was placed on an elevated platform which was illumined with lights and tastefully decorated with ferns, garlands and flowers. The service was conducted by Swami Akhilananda before an enraptured audience, and Swami Gnaneshwarananda entertained them all with vocal and instrumental music at the beginning and at the end of the service, which made a profound impression upon all who joined the function. Service over,

Frederick A. Wilmot, the Editor of the Providence Journal and the Evening Bulletin, who had the good fortune of seeing Swami Vivekananda and listening to his speeches in America, delivered an illuminating discourse on the life and teachings of the Swami. Swami Gnaneshwarananda and Swami Akhilananda also spoke feelingly on the occasion and in suitable words brought home to the audience the sacred message the great Swami had delivered to humanity. The attendance was so large that the hall could hardly accommodate all the devotees who attended the function. The ceremony was a splendid success.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT Dacca.

The 94th Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva was celebrated with due éclat in the Dacca Ramakrishna Mission Premises on Sunday, the 17th March, 1929. The ceremony continued from early dawn till 10 P. M. The principal functions of the day were Kirtan, readings from the scriptures, Mathur Padabali, musical concert, Kali Kirtan, and the general meeting of the Mission. In the afternoon a general meeting was held under the presidency of Babu Jagesh Chandra Das, Zamindar. Babu Manmatha Nath Roy, Munsiff, Babu Nilkanta Chakravorty, pleader, and Prof. Atul Chandra Sen, eloquently dwelt upon the life and teachings of the Master, which were highly appreciated by the audience.

Dr. Shahidullah, M. A., D. Litt. of the University of Dacca, then paid a glowing tribute to the hallowed memory of Sri Ramakrishna. He said that the people were creating artificial barriers between man and man by their religious wrangling. Truth is one, men call it by various names. Everybody is uttering the holy name of One Supreme Being. Difference in names matters nothing. To find out unity in diversity is the greatest of all achievements. It was Ramakrishna who himself realised different religions of the world and came to the final conclusion that all religions are true. Sincere and whole-hearted devotion to each leads ultimately to the same goal. It was Ramakrishna who sounded the death-knell of religious dissensions and established harmony in diversity. Ramakrishna Deva realised Mohammedanism and during his Sadhana had even gone the length of undergoing all sorts of formal ceremonials and penances of Islam. He had the vision of a luminous figure having long beards—the Prophet Mohamed himself, whom the Mussalmans call "Nur Nabi". Ramakrishna was a Saviour—that was why he had the visions of Mohamed and Christ. Ramakrishna heralded the dawn of a new era—an era of religious harmony and toleration. He is called by the Hindus an Avatar, and incarnation of God. It is all the same whether we call Him an Avatar, a Prophet, a Messenger, the Enlightened One, a Tirthankar, the Nur Nabi—all convey the same meaning. Ramakrishna Deva had catholicity and toleration because he had seen the whole of the Absolute Truth. It was through his worthy disciple Swami Vivekananda of world-wide fame that Ramakrishna propagated the gospel of the serving of the poor as Narayanas even to the furthest corners of the globe. The speaker alluded to some incidents from the Quran and Jalaluddin Rumi showing that Islam also preached the serving of the poor. In his opinion the most attractive feature of the Ramakrishna Mission was the serving of the poor, the diseased, and the decrepit as Narayanas, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. Ramakrishna would be enthroned in the hearts of all the people only when they would accept his service of humanity. Finally the speaker on

behalf of the Muslim community tendered his sincerest homage and congratulations to the selfless band of Sannyasins of the Ramkrishna Order who had dedicated their lives to the service of humanity irrespective of caste, creed, and colour.

The President then rose and heartily congratulated the monks of the Math on their efforts to build a temple of Unity where they had all assembled to pay their respective homage to the hallowed memory of Ramakrishna. The President said that it was an age of synthesis. Ramakrishna was the embodiment of this synthesis. Romain Rolland, the great French literateur and the greatest European thinker of the day has said, "Ramakrishna is a river of Love, while Vivekananda a dynamo of spiritual force." The Westerners are now sick of the orgies of warfare—they earnestly hunger for peace. Romain Rolland in his true prophetic vision, finds a voice of eternal peace in the message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. The speaker made a fervent appeal to the rising generation to follow in the footsteps of the great Saint.

In conclusion Pundit Hiranbha Nath Tarkatirtha while offering a vote of thanks to the chair, the speakers, and the audience, said that they could all accept the religion of Ramakrishna as his was a universal religion.

With a concluding song the meeting terminated late at night.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENT'S HOME, MYLAPORE, MADRAS

We have received for review a copy of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, on the working of the Institution during the year 1928. The outstanding needs of the Home, *viz.*, the building of quarters for the teaching-staff of the Residential High School and the development of the Industrial section received practical shape. The starting of a magazine for the Home by the old boys formed another important feature of the year. The number of students on the rolls at the beginning of the year was 121; and the numerical strength was 137 at the end of the year. There were 27 students reading in Arts Colleges, one in the Medical College, 89 in the High School classes and 25 in the Industrial School attached to the Home. It should be remembered that the Residential High School attached to the Home prepares pupils for the School Final Examination and follows the Departmental syllabuses with a few necessary alterations. The Laboratory and the School Library are decently equipped and the School Museum is a great help to stimulate the interest of the boys in nature study. Manual training in carpentry, weaving, rattan-work, and goldsmithy, is compulsory for all boys. In the Industrial School the 3rd year classes in carpentry and cabinet-making and mechanical foreman and fitters' work were opened during the year. Articles of furniture and models made by the boys in the workshop were exhibited at the All-India Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition held in December 1927, and the exhibits elicited appreciation from the public, and the Exhibition Committee also awarded a silver medal. The results of the Examinations were also highly satisfactory. Fifteen pupils were sent up from the High School for the S.S.L.C. Examination and 12 were declared eligible for College course. Four out of five passed the Intermediate Examination in Arts.

The Tutorial Staff consisted of 8 resident teachers each of whom was in charge of about 15 to 18 boys generally of the same class. The household management of the Home including the gardening was as

usual in the hands of the boys themselves. The duties and responsibilities were distributed among the boys according to their age and capacity. Religious classes were held in the mornings and evenings. On the Gita Day held at Madras in the Sanskrit College premises, several boys of the Home secured medals and prizes for Gita recitation. Physical training class was also held thrice a week in the mornings. Facilities were opened for the mental, physical and spiritual development of the students. The Home has a medical ward of its own with necessary outfits. The services of the distinguished medical practitioners of the locality were available for the boys whenever required during the year. 260 books were added to the Library, and the Reading Room was enriched with a large number of magazines during the year. The total receipts of the year amounted to Rs. 43,854-10-0 and the expenditure to Rs. 44,101-5-5, showing a deficit of Rs. 216-11-6. A sum of Rs. 33,415 was added to the Permanent Funds of the Home. The Students' Home has in short proved to be one of the most prominent and useful educational Institutions in the Presidency of Madras, and we doubt not that in view of the sympathy and support it has hitherto received from the public, the management would not find it hard to secure funds for the further development of the Industrial section and the strengthening of the Permanent Endowment Fund. The management express their heart-felt thanks to all friends, sympathisers, subscribers and donors but for whose ungrudging help and co-operation, it would not have been possible to make the institution as it is to-day.

THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, CALCUTTA

The Annual Report of the Society for the year 1927, shows that the Society arranged thirty-two religious lectures on Saturdays in the hall of the Bengal Theosophical Society in the year 1927. The birthdays of Lord Buddha and Vivekananda were specially celebrated in the public meetings. Three monthly conversaziones were held under the presidency of eminent Sadhus of the Ramkrishna Order in different localities of the City. Religious classes were held once a week in the Society room, and were conducted by Swami Vasudovananda in which the Bhagavat Gita was read and explained to the public. From the public Charitable Homeopathic Dispensary 634 cases were treated with free medicine, several widows were also helped, 18 students were helped with monthly stipends to the amount of Rs. 167. And Rs. 50 was paid to the Orissa Relief Fund through the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission. Hundred books were added to the Library and Reading Room, totalling 3,294 books at the end of the year. The Corporation of Calcutta paid a grant of Rs. 150, towards the Library Fund, and 2,677 volumes of books were issued from the Library during the year under review. The total number of members on the 31st December, 1927, was 425, including one Hony., and 12 Life Members—(one dying during the year). The total receipts of the year amounted to Rs. 2,260-15-0. Total cash in hand, including previous year's balance (which was Rs. 2,270-6-9) was therefore Rs. 4,531-5-9. The total expenditure of the year was Rs. 2,024-1-6. Balance in hand was Rs. 2,507-4-3; of the balance Rs. 1,818-3-0 belongs to the Building Fund.

The first and foremost want of the Society is the proposed Vivekananda Memorial Hall and a habitation for its office, library and dispensary, etc. At present the Memorial Hall Fund, including interest, amounts to Rs. 1,818-3-0. Besides this, Rs. 3,000 have been promised by two of its sympathetic members. The Society appeals for encouragement, sympathy and support from the public and we

hope Calcutta will soon be adorned with a fitting memorial of the great Swami—the prophet and patriot-saint of modern India.

THE R. K. MISSION BRANCH CENTRE, BARISAL

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Branch Centre, Barisal, for the year 1927 gives a brief outline of the works done by it during the year. Two weekly sittings were regularly held, one in the Mission-House and another at Alekhanda, and the number of such sittings came up to 90. Sacred books were read and discussed on those occasions. Volunteers from the Mission were also deputed to nurse the sick at their houses, to pick up the helpless from the streets and send them to the hospital for proper treatment, and the number of such persons was 94. A small Reading Room and a Library were conducted; the Library contained 416 books at the end of the year. Occasional monetary help was rendered to the School and College students. The Students' Home of this Mission located at Alekhanda accommodated 7 students, of whom 5 were free and 2 paying. There was adequate provision for the physical and spiritual development of the students and all the household duties of the Home were performed by the boys themselves. But unfortunately the Mission has not yet been able to procure a land of its own and the Students' Home is still located in a house rented for the purpose. We hope the public would generously respond to the appeal of the Secretary and remove the outstanding needs of the Mission at an early date.

THE R. K. MISSION, SONARGAON, DACCÁ

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission, Sonargaon, Dacca for 1927 is to our hand. The Mission held a religious class on every Sunday on the works of Swami Vivekananda and the sayings and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The library contained 514 books and 5 Monthlies for the use of the public. Two hundred and thirty books were issued in course of the year under review. Five boys were paid their schooling fees and 5 poor boys were accommodated in the Students' Home. The Mission ran a Dispensary with both Allopathic and Homeopathic departments for the poor, and altogether 1,980 patients received free medicine from the Charitable Dispensary. House to house relief was also rendered by the workers of the Ashram and useful work was done by the volunteer corps organised by the Ashrama authorities during the Langalbund Mela days. Besides, the Mission responded with promptness and regularity to the call for relief from time to time. Funds permitting, an Industrial Annex to this Home for vocational and technical training of those interested is now under contemplation. The Mission proposes to extend its activities, for which adequate financial support is essentially necessary. We hope the appeal shall not go in vain.

THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, JAMSHEDPUR BRANCH

The Annual Report of the Society for 1927 shows that religious classes were regularly held in the Society's premises and occasional lectures were also arranged during the year. The Birthday Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and the Holy Mother were duly observed. The Society's library contained 1018 books and a good number of Monthlies and Dailies, which were properly utilised by the reading public. The Society ran three primary schools and one night school. The total expenditure on the schools during the year

was Rs. 868-13-6. The Students' Home of the Society accommodated 13 boys against 9 of the previous year. The entire cost of messing which amounted to Rs. 655-9-0 was met from the Society's Funds. There were 13 regular workers in the Workers' Home, available for the work of the Society. The activities of the Society extended also over the nursing of patients in the Hospital, cremation of the dead, giving of occasional help to the needy and the helpless. The Society's workers undertook relief work as well. A centrally situated building for the location of the L. Town Branch and a building for the Students' Home are matters of urgent necessity ; and we believe, in view of the Society's multifarious works, the appeal for help shall be generously responded to.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, BANGALORE

The Thirteenth Annual Report on the working of the Public Library Seshadri Memorial Hall, Bangalore, for 1927-28 gives a detailed account of its workings during the year. The number of members on the rolls at the end of the year was 904. The year opened with a total of 13,841 volumes on the shelves. One thousand two hundred and fifty-seven books were newly added as against 1,111 in the previous year. The total number of books issued to the readers came up to 72,043 as against 61,295 in the previous year. The library received during the year 144 periodicals of India and of the foreign countries. The popularity of the Vernacular Home Circulating Section for ladies continued to increase and the number of lady members on the rolls was 98 as against 72 in the preceding year. The subscription collected during the year averaged Rs. 726 a month against Rs. 668 in the previous year, showing an average monthly increase of Rs. 58. Having regard to the growing usefulness of the institution, the Committee hope that the enlightened City Fathers will be pleased to enhance their grant to the library in the coming year. The Institution has been playing an important part in the intellectual and moral elevation of the people, and it is earnestly desired that it must have a sound financial footing so as to carry on its work of educating the public.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman ’ ”.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER

ॐ

नमामीशमीशान-निर्वाणरूपं, विभु व्यापकं ब्रह्मवेदस्वरूपम् ।
अजं निर्गुणं निर्विकल्पं निरीहं, चिदाकारमाकाशवासं भजेऽहम् ॥
कलातीतकल्याण-कल्पान्तकारिन्, सदा सञ्जनानन्ददातः पुरारे ।
चिदानन्द-सन्दोह-मोहापकारिन्, प्रसीद प्रसीद प्रभो मन्मथारे ॥
न यावद्भवानीश-पादारविन्दं, भजन्तीह लोके चतुर्वर्गकामाः ।
न तावद्भजन्ते भवे शान्तिलेशं, प्रसीद प्रभो सर्वभृताधिवास ॥
न जानामि योगं जपं नैव पूजां, नतोऽहं सदा सर्वतः शवं तुभ्यम् ।
जग-जन्म-दुःखौघ-तातप्यमानं, प्रभो पाहि पापान्नमामीश शम्भो ॥

Salutations unto Thee,—the All-pervading and the Great, who art liberation itself and whose embodied form is the Vedas. I worship Thee,—the unborn, attributeless and unconditioned One ; who art without any desire—whose form is brightness itself and whose garment is the sky.

O Lord ! Thou who art beyond all duality, the Cause of all that is good as well as of dissolution, the Bestower of bliss on the holy ones ; Thou who art the embodiment of knowledge and bliss, and the destroyer of delusion ; be Thou propitious unto me.

Those that aspire after the fourfold desires in the world can hardly be the recipient of peace supreme, unless, O Lord of the Mother divine, do they worship the lotus-feet of Thee on this earth.

I do not know the practice of Yoga ; nor am I skilled in Japam or rituals. Dost Thou, O Lord, save me from sins,—thy humble suppliant sorely afflicted with countless miseries of birth and death.

TULSIDAS

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(Continued from page 6)

III

Adhar entertained the Master with fruits and sweets. The Master then left for Jadu Mallik's house.

It was a beautiful moonlit night. Having reached Jadu Mallik's house, the Master and the devotees went directly to the shrine, where they found the Mother's image beautifully decorated with flowers, sandal paste and garlands. Lights were burning and the priest was seated before Her. A devotee, instructed by the Master, made an offering of a rupee and saluted the Mother.

Sri Ramakrishna was all along standing, looking on at the Mother, and lo ! he was plunged into Samadhi ! He stood motionless as a stone image and his eyes were winkless. A long time after, he heaved out a deep sigh and came down from Samadhi. He exclaimed, "Mother, I am coming !" His voice sounded as of one under intoxication and he was yet unable to walk. He asked Ramlal to sing ; he said, that would restore him to normal consciousness.

Ramlal sang : "O Mother, Thou Delight of Siva, Thou hast charmed the world !....."

Now the Master was able to walk towards the drawing-room. He repeated several times, as he went, "Mother, do thou abide in my heart." On entering the drawing-room, Sri Ramakrishna found Jadu Mallik sitting with his friends. But the Master was still in an ecstatic mood, and he began to sing forthwith a song of the Divine Mother of which the refrain was, "O Mother Blissful, do not make me unhappy !" When he finished this he asked Jadu Mallik, "O Babu, what song shall I sing ? Shall I sing that one which begins with, ' Am I thy hapless son ?'"

Without waiting for any reply, however, he began to sing :

"Am I thy hapless son, that thou shalt frighten me with thy frowns ?

"The ruddy feet which Siva so lovingly holds on his heart, are my treasure. Why then am I thus harassed when I seek to possess my own property ?

"I have carefully preserved the deed attested by Siva himself. And I shall now bring my plaint before him, and assuredly get an uncontested decree.

"Then only—when I shall ceremoniously lay out the documents given me by my Guru, shalt thou feel what sort of son I am !

"Says Ramprasad, this law-suit between the son and the mother, will no doubt be a mighty affair. But I shall be quiet only when thou hast pacified me by taking me into thy affectionate arms."

The song ended, the Master came down to the normal plane by and by, and was given the Mother's Prasadam, as desired by him.

A few friends and sycophants of Jadu Mallik were sitting by. The Master was seated on a chair, with M. and a few devotees near him. The other devotees were waiting in an adjacent room. The Master said smilingly to Jadu, "Why do you entertain buffoons?"

Jadu : What if I do ? Will you therefore refuse to redeem me ?

Sri Ramakrishna : The Ganges cannot save a consummate drunkard. . . . How is it you have not yet arranged for Chandi-song in your house ?

Jadu had promised to the Master to arrange it.

Jadu : I have been very busy all these days.

Sri Ramakrishna : How is that ? A man must stick to his word ! ' The word of a man, like the tusk of an elephant, cannot be retracted.' Is it not so ?

Jadu (smiling) : Yes, it is.

Sri Ramakrishna : You are a very calculative man. You never act without extreme calculation. You want things to be like a Brahmin's cow which is expected to eat little, but produce dung in a large quantity and give torrents of milk ! (All laugh). [After a short silence] I see, you are like the stone at Ramjivanpur, half of which is cold and half hot. You have your mind in both God and the world.....

IV

It was ten at night when the Master came to the house of Khelat Ghosh. The whole house and the extensive courtyard were flooded with moonlight.

No sooner did the Master enter the house than he was overpowered by a superconscious mood, and in that ecstatic mood he was welcomed by the host into one of the inner apartments of the big and almost solitary house. The devotee who had invited the Master was one of the occasional visitors at Dakshineswar. He was a brother-in-law of the owner of the house and a devout and orthodox Vaishnava, as his dress and various religious marks on the body indicated. The Vaishnavas are very conservative generally and speak ill of the Shaktas and the Jnanis. Evidently in reference to this fanatical attitude, the Master observed,

"It is not right to say that one's own creed alone is true and other creeds are false. God is one and not two or more, and Him men call by various names. Some call Him 'God' and others 'Allah'. Some others call Him 'Krishna', or 'Siva' or 'Brahma'. It is like the water of a tank. The Hindus name it *jal*, the Christians *water*, and the Mohammedans *pani*. But it is one and the same substance. 'So many creeds—so many paths'. They are so many ways to the realisation of God, like rivers entering into the same ocean.

"The Vedas, the Puranas and the Tantras, all teach the same Sachchidananda. The Vedas teach the Sachchidananda Brahman, the Puranas, the Sachchidananda Krishna and the Tantras the Sachchidananda Siva."

The Vaishnava Devotee (after a short silence) : Sir, why should I think of God at all ?

Sri Ramakrishna : The attitude is justified of the Jivan-mukta alone. With others, it is only a matter of talk, not true faith. The worldly-minded have heard that there is God and that everything happens by his will, but they do not believe it at heart. Do you know what is God with the worldly people ?—like the God of children, by whose name they swear having learnt it from the wranglings of their aunts.

"Not all can know Him. He has made good as well as bad people, devotees as well as those averse to God, those who have

faith in God as well as those who have not. His vast creation is full of variety, wherein his power manifests in unequal degrees, just as the sun reflects differently in earth, and water and mirror,—brightest in the last. There are again various gradations, among those who are devoted to God,—the highest, the middle and the lowest. All these are mentioned in the Gita.”

Vaishnava : Yes, sir.

Sri Ramakrishna : The lowest kind of devotees say that God exists high above the sky. The middle say that He exists in everything as life and consciousness. The highest say that it is God who has become all these—whatever seen are but different forms of the Lord. He has become this Maya, Jiva and Jagat, and there is nothing which is not He.

Vaishnava : Does anyone realise this ?

Sri Ramakrishna : Not until one has seen God. And there are signs by which to know whether one has seen Him or not. He is sometimes like a mad man, laughing, crying, dancing and singing. Sometimes he appears as a child of five years, simple and unsophisticated, devoid of egoism, unattached, free and blissful. Sometimes he looks like a ghoul—dirty, making no difference of pure and impure things and observing no purificatory rules. At other times he becomes a non-living thing, apparently senseless, with a vacant look, unable to do any work and make any effort.

“ ‘Thou and thine’—this is knowledge, ‘I and mine’ this is ignorance. ‘O Lord, thou art the doer, not I’ this is knowledge. ‘O, Lord, body, mind, house, family, beings, universe, all these are thine, not mine,’—this is knowledge. The ignorant only speak of God as distant. The knowing ones feel him to be very near, abiding in their own hearts as the Internal Regulator, and as embodied in all the various forms outside.”

LORD BUDDHA AND HIS MESSAGE

In the great cycle of evolution the world sometimes reaches a stage when the whole humanity quivers under the stimulus of a new life for a fresh start on its career of progress. The sixth century before the birth of Christ may be reckoned as one of such remarkable periods in the history of the human race. The soul of humanity woke up as it

were to the vision of a far-off destiny after a profound slumber of countless centuries. The signs of a new consciousness were manifest in the silent march of events in the social and political life of the people. It was an 'Age of Confusion' in China when the two great master-minds, Confucius and Lao-Tse, lived and ushered in an era of unprecedented order and peace in the land. It was in the very same century that Zoroaster, the Prophet of Iran, opened a new chapter in the history of the spiritual life of his countrymen. The same spirit of enquiry was palpably manifest in the Near East as well. The Jews of Babylon found in Isaiah their messenger of light and freedom; and at Ephesus the genius of Heraclitus harnessed itself to the noble task of solving the intricate problems of human existence. It was in such an age that India—the homeland of saints and saviours—produced one of the greatest of her sons. He was Buddha—the Light of the world. Never indeed was the time more propitious for the advent of such a soul in India. The abstruse philosophy of the Upanishads that dealt with the ultimate reality of being had become a meaningless jargon to the common run of men. The most unostentatious religion of the Vedic seers had degenerated into cumbrous ceremonials and forms. The descendants of the ancient sages had stepped out as the self-constituted custodians of the moral and spiritual interests of the people,—arrogating to themselves all the privileges in the society and holding in their hands the very master-key to the floodgate of spiritual life like the demoralised European clergies of the 16th century assuring salvation to the ignorant laity by 'the sale of Indulgences'. In short the spirit of religion had been stifled in the hocus-pocus and the paraphernalia of elaborate ritualism; and the Vedic gods had lost all significance and existed only in name.

The society on the other hand had become stratified into layers with a considerable number of sub-divisions. It was utterly disfigured by the unhealthy distinctions of castes and privileges with the result that a fire of discontent had begun to smoulder among the socially ostracised masses of the time. The Sudras, the very backbone of the country, by their industrious life and development of various arts and crafts, had already outgrown the cast-iron mould in which they were held in society. Justice demanded that the invidious barriers must be levelled down to ensure a healthy flow of life and culture amongst all the sections of the society—that the industrial classes must have their legitimate aspirations satisfied and be allowed the amount of freedom they were fit to enjoy in the collective life of social good. Politically, the country was parcelled out into numerous independent states, each struggling for supremacy at the expense of his neighbour. The systems of government varied from autocratic monarchies to self-

governing communities. There was indeed no cohesive force to check the girations of these repellent molecules of body-politic and to weld them together into a harmonious socio-political life based upon the bed-rock of a transcendent spiritual idealism. Needless to say, the life of Buddha was ushered into being to fulfil this crying need of the time. And his message of love and peace was hailed with universal acclamation ; for he stood as an embodiment of a mighty challenge to the inhumanities practised for ages upon the duped masses of the land by the so-called guardians of law and spirituality. His religion soon became the refuge of many a thirsting soul and the very basis of one of the most consolidated empires in India.

Gautama Buddha was the son of a Sakya chieftain of Kapilavastu. It was prophesied that the child would either be a Raja Chakravartin, a universal monarch, or the founder of a new religion. Suddhodhan the father of the child was not a little disconcerted at the prospect of his son relinquishing the pleasures of the crown for a life of renunciation and poverty. Determined to switch back the destiny of the prince, he left no stone unturned to minister to the physical comforts of his son, little apprehending that all his efforts to wean him away from the pursuit of a monastic ideal served only to prepare the ground for the consummation of such a life. With the advance of years the prince developed an introspective mentality, and day after day the visions of a more glorious life—a life consecrated at the altar of suffering humanity—began to flash before his imagination and rendered him completely restless. Even the charm of married life failed to silence the inner craving of the soul ; for he was born not to satisfy the demands of the flesh but to solve the complex problems of human existence and to evolve a radical panacea for all the ills humanity is heir to. It is indeed a universal phenomenon that when the right moment comes, nobody can turn back the page of destiny. That was the case with the prince Siddhartha. In one silent hour of the night when the whole nature was locked up in the embrace of sweet sleep, the prince resolved to tear himself away from the blissful scenes of his youthful life in search of the light of Truth. He left behind all the shining prospects of earthly power and glory and plunged into the darkness of the night, thus changing once for all the sceptre for a begging bowl for the salvation of himself and the redemption of the rest of mankind. Indeed he was destined to be a universal monarch, but not of this material world ; for it was ordained that his sovereignty would be characterised not by bloodshed or violence, but by the one absorbing passion of love for humanity irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality. So said the prince :

" My chariot shall not roll with bloody wheels
 From victory to victory, till earth
 Wears the red record of my name. I choose
 To tread its paths with patient, stainless feet,
 Making its dust my bed, its loneliest wastes
 My dwellings and its meanest things my mates ;
 Clad in no prouder garb than outcasts wear,
 Fed with no meals save what the charitable
 Give of their will, sheltered by no more pomp
 Than the dim cave lends or the jungle-bush.
 This will I do because the woeful cry
 Of life and all flesh living cometh up
 Into my ears, and all my soul is full
 Of pity for the sickness of this world ;
 Which I will heal, if healing may be found
 By utmost renouncing and strong strife."

The intensity of his spiritual craving gave him no rest and drove him from place to place. During the first year of his new life he mastered what the Hindu philosophy had to teach, from some Brahmin ascetics near Rajagriha, the then capital of Magadh. But this dry intellectualism did not quench the ever-growing thirst of his soul. He left the company of these teachers, and for six long years he subjected himself to the severest form of asceticism. But these penances could bring him no enlightenment save physical atrophy and mental inertia. He came to understand that the cherished object of his life could not be realised by mere physical mortification. His was thenceforward a middle path. " Two extremes," he said, " are there, which the recluse must avoid—the life of passion and of sensuality on the one hand, a low and pagan way, ignoble and profiting nothing, and on the other hand self-tortures, which is also ignoble and unprofitable, as well as very painful. The path which I have discovered is a Middle Path which opens the eyes, gives understanding and leads to peace, to Nirvana." The intense mental anguish and physical hardship which Buddha had to undergo during his period of Sadhana before the attainment of supreme spiritual illumination form one of the most instructive chapters in the annals of his glorious life. His mind was swayed by thousand and one temptations ; failures and disappointments disturbed the calm equipoise of his soul many a time. But his deathless determination to realise the truth triumphed in the end, and in one blessed moment of his life when the senses were charmed down into a state of sacred calm, the vision came upon him, and he was plunged into the ocean of supreme Bliss under the Bo-tree on the banks of the Nairanjana. Buddha attained Nirvana—not a far-off goal beyond

life but a spiritual state realisable even here in one's own life. With a heart throbbing with compassion and attuned to catch every quiver of the life of the world, Buddha stood before humanity to proclaim the truth of his realisation. He travelled from door to door with this priceless gift and invited one and all without any distinction whatsoever to embrace his doctrine of love and peace. He proclaimed a message of sympathy for all—a message which has in it 'the eternity of a universal hope, the immortality of a boundless love, an indestructible element of faith in final good and the proudest assertion ever made of human freedom.' In infinite compassion did Buddha call out to humanity :

"Ye suffer for yourselves. None else compels,
None other holds you that ye live and die,
And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss
Its spokes of agony,

"Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness.
Behold, I show you truth! Lower than hell,
Higher than heaven, outside the utmost stars,
Farther than Brahman doth dwell,

"Before beginning, and without an end.
As space eternal and as surety sure,
Is fixed a Power divine which moves to Good,
Only its laws endure.

"Such is the Law which moves to righteousness
Which none at last can turn aside or stay ;
The heart of it is Love, the end of it
Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey."

None has ever been so misunderstood as the Lord Buddha, and truly Dr. Hopkins says: "There is perhaps no person in the history in regard to whom have arisen so many opinions that are either wholly or partly false." Buddhism, as we understand, is a system of self-culture and self-restraint. It aims at the extinction of human suffering through a process of purification of the mind by the pursuit of a life of selfless activity and holiness. Buddha was impressed with the idea that a life of self-abnegation and absolute purity is the *sine qua non* of the attainment of Nirvana—the *summum bonum* of human existence. He discovered the four Noble Truths,—the Truth of suffering, the Truth of the cause of suffering, the Truth of the cessation of suffering and the Truth of the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Nirvana. Human life, says Buddha, is but a bundle of suffering, and the thirst for life and enjoyment is the procreative cause of repeated births and deaths. Complete annihilation of this desire is therefore the only way

out of this interminable cycle of human existences, and this can only be consummated by a faithful adherence to the Noble Eightfold Path, viz., Right belief, Right aspiration, Right speech, Right conduct, Right means of livelihood, Right exertion, Right mindfulness and Right meditation. Just before his passing away he called together the Bhikkus and enjoined them to follow the laws codified in the form of Seven Jewels, viz., the four earnest meditations; the fourfold great struggle against sin; the four roads to saintship; the five moral powers; the five organs of spiritual sense; the seven kinds of wisdom; and the noble eightfold path. Needless to say that a faithful observance of the moral injunctions embodied in the seven jewels must lead the sincere aspirant after Truth to Nirvana,—to 'the extinction of that sinful condition of mind, that thirst for life and its pleasures which bring on renewed existences'. 'The whole world, says Buddha, is but an outcome of illusion, and there is nothing of the nature of permanency in it. The cosmos is always tending to renovation or destruction. It is always in a state of flux. To this universal law of composition and dissolution men and gods form no exception. 'The unity of forces, which constitutes a sentient being must sooner or later be dissolved; and it is only through ignorance and delusion that such a being indulges in the dream that it is a separate and self-existent entity.' Man, in his opinion, is an assemblage of different properties called skandas such as material qualities, sensations, abstract ideas, tendencies of mind and mental powers. And it is only the Karma which is permanent, and determines the future course of a man's life. Thus instead of accepting the deep-rooted Hindu belief in the transmigration of soul he has described this metempsychosis in terms of character which is the result of one's own doings, good or evil. One life, says Buddha, stands in the same relation to the next as the flame of a lamp does to the flame of another lit up by it. Though there is a continuity of the flame, still both are not one and the same. Human life is likewise the resultant of a man's own Karma, and man being the maker of his own destiny must reap as he shall sow; it is only *in the action, thought and speech* that the identity between the two existences can be found after the body is dissolved into atoms or its constituent parts. In fact the results of the actions are not dissipated into many separate streams but are concentrated in the formation of a new sentient being—new in its constituent parts but the same in essence, its being, its doing. Thus each individual in the long chain of life inherits all of good or evil, which all its predecessors have done, and takes up the struggle towards enlightenment exactly there where they have left it. In short 'the Karma of the previous set of skandas. (i.e., the previous body with mental tendencies

and capabilities, etc.) determines the locality, nature and future of the new set of skandas—i.e., of the new sentient being.' The theory of Karma has thus been taken up to explain the theory of transmigration, and as the condition of future existence is solely dependent upon a man's own doings, he must pursue all his actions in a spirit of complete desirelessness and cultivate absolute purity of thought so as to neutralise the effect of his evil doings of the previous birth ; for lusting after happiness in life is the root of all bondage and miseries on earth. 'Drop then this petty foolish longing for personal happiness,' Buddhism would say. 'Here it comes of ignorance, and leads to sin, which leads to sorrow ; and there the conditions of existence are the same, and each new birth will leave you ignorant and finite still. There is nothing eternal ; and the very cosmos is passing away : nothing is, everything becomes. And all that you see and feel, bodily or mentally, of yourself will pass away like everything else ; there will only remain the accumulated result of all your actions, words and thoughts. Be pure then, and kind, not lazy in thought. Be awake, shake off your delusions, and enter resolutely on the Path which will lead you away from these restless, tossing waves of the ocean of life ;—the Path to the Joy and Rest of the Nirvana of Wisdom and Goodness and Peace,'—writes Dr. Rhys Davids in his Buddhism.

But nothing has been so fruitful of controversies as the idea of Nirvana. Buddha understood the practical difficulty in the promulgation of the truths of his realisation before men of the world, who are concerned more with the actualities of daily life than the metaphysical subtleties that demand a trained intellect and mature understanding for their proper apprehension. The lofty teachings of the Upanishads were at that time kept confined to a limited circle of men, as they were beyond the easy reach and comprehension of the untutored intelligence of the common people riddled with manifold concerns of their daily existence. That is why Buddha scrupulously abstained from committing himself to any positive statement about the existence or non-existence of the soul. "Whenever Buddha denies existence to the Ego, what he really does is to deny reality to the individual Ego, to the ordinary surface self." And rightly Prof. Sarma has pointed out recently in his learned article in the *Monist* that in one sense, Nirvana is extinction ; but what is extinguished is not the fundamental reality of life but the empirical self. Buddha has also made it distinctly clear that Nirvana is not the monopoly of any particular section of humanity but is the common heritage of all irrespective of caste or creed. Nirvana, it must be understood, is not the negation of the spiritual values of life. "It is a state," says Buddha, "where there is neither earth nor water, nor heat, nor air ; neither infinity of space, nor

infinity of consciousness nor nothingness ; nor perception, nor non-perception ; neither this world nor that world ; neither sun nor moon. It is the Uncreate. That is neither coming nor going, nor standing ; neither death, nor birth. It is without stability, without change ; it is the eternal which never originates and never passes away. There is the end of sorrow." It is in short the same as the Upanishadic at-one-ment with the Supreme Reality—the mergence of the empirical self in the infinitude of one cosmic existence. The same spiritual state has also been emphasised in the Upanishads. The Mundaka says, "There the sun shines not, nor the moon nor the stars. These lightnings also do not shine there ; how can this fire then do the same ?" So also has it been described in the Taittiriya,—the condition of at-one-ment is indeed ineffable. It may be called neither existence nor non-existence, neither stability nor change, neither consciousness nor unconsciousness. In truth the Buddhistic Nirvana is identical with the Upanishadic at-one-ment with the Supreme Entity—or Brahman. And Buddha himself has declared that this spiritual condition has been attained in his own life and is accessible to every earnest seeker who shall tread upon the Noble Eightfold Path. It is thus not the destruction but the sublimation of life into the divine. And the greatest service the Lord Buddha has done to humanity is the democratisation of the sublime truths of the Upanishads and the lucid presentment thereof without those metaphysical subtleties and jugglery of words which none but a disciplined mind and a prodigious intellect can understand. He had to deal with various types of men from the Brahmins to the Pariahs and the robbers downward for whom he built up a moral code which was easy of comprehension as well as of application in practical life. Thus what was abstract and theoretical was made practical, and any man, be he rich or poor, a Brahmin or a Chandala, was able to attain Nirvana by means of a strict observance of the rules embodied in his system of self-culture.

Buddha brought about a complete revolution in the social and religious life of the people of his time by presenting before them a scheme of democratic religion that demolished all distinctions of castes and privileges and opened the gateway of peace and salvation to all. He was not indeed an innovator ; for what he has said could be found in their fulness in most of the orthodox philosophical systems of the Hindus, existing before Buddha. "His credit lies in giving the Upanishadic teachings a practical turn, bringing them into the closest touch with the work-a-day world, translating them into the language of daily life and in making them available for the man in the street." And rightly has Dr. Radhakrishnan observed in his *Indian Philosophy* : "Buddha did not look upon himself as an innovator but only as the

restorer of the ancient way, *i.e.*, the way of the Upanishads." Gautama even permitted the adoption of the popular belief in the Hindu gods but these beings, he held, had also to struggle through repeated births in various spheres to attain that Nirvana which is the supreme destiny of all. "Gautama," says Dr. Rhys Davids, "was born, and brought up, and lived, and died a Hindu....There was not much in the metaphysics and psychology of Gautama which cannot be found in one or other of the orthodox systems, and a great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books. Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adopted, enlarged, ennobled, and systematised that which had already been well said by others; in the way in which he carried out to their logical conclusion principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers. The difference between him and other teachers lay chiefly in his deep earnestness and in his broad public spirit of philanthropy.....Buddhism was the child, the product of Hinduism. Gautama's whole training was Brahminism; he probably deemed himself to be the most correct exponent of the ancient faith; and it can only be claimed for him that he was the greatest, and wisest, and best of the Hindus."

Besides the masses, the religion of Buddha found a ready acceptance among the great Kshatriya monarchs and the illustrious self-governing communities of the Mallas, the Sakyas, the Koliyanas and the Licchavis of Northern India during his life-time. He was welcomed as the redeemer of the oppressed humanity. There was in fact a spontaneous outburst of popular sympathy on his side as his practical philosophy did not shrink in the struggle with the abuses most peculiar to his time. It was the religion of Buddha which in after years became the most powerful force to unify all the disruptive elements into one great homogenous empire. The necessity of an organised Order of monks was most keenly felt, and it was during the life-time of Buddha that the celebrated Order of the Buddhist Bhikkus came into being. He laid down the most stringent rules and regulations for their guidance, and his attitude towards the purity of such a life of monasticism was of the most uncompromising nature. And it must be admitted that the services which these monks have rendered to humanity form some of the glowing chapters in the history of human progress. Much against his will, Buddha had to build a separate Order for the nuns in compliance with the persistent importunities of Ananda, one of his foremost disciples, though he was fully conscious that 'their admission meant that the Good Law should not endure for a thousand years, but only for five hundred.' And it is needless to point out that his prophetic utterance proved to be too true. More than two

thousand and five hundred years have rolled by; the memory of the brilliant galaxy of Sannyasins that gathered round the banner of the Lord Buddha and the splendid contribution they made to the sum total of human knowledge serve as a fountain of unfailing inspiration to all even to-day. The merits and demerits, the success and failure of this holy Order which was one of the greatest organisations ever ushered into existence, must be a standing eye-opener to the inaugurators of such Orders for ages to come. India has witnessed a similar movement in the recent years, and a sacred Order of monks with the ideals of renunciation and service as its guiding principles has already been built up to mobilise all the cultural forces of India for the uplift of land as well as for the collective good of mankind. The country needs it, nay the whole world wants it to-day. But where is that burning spirit of renunciation and grim resolution that characterised Buddha and his disciples in the pursuit of their ideal of life? Spirituality is the only dynamic force that sustains a man in the manifold spheres of his activity. Let every one of these servants of humanity be imbued with that spirit of dogged tenacity that finds utterance in that historic saying of Buddha :

इहासने शुष्यतु मे शरीरं त्वगस्थिमांसं प्रलयञ्च यातु ।

अप्राप्य बोधिं बहुकल्पदुर्लभां नैवासनात् कायमतश्चलिष्यते ॥

“ Let this body of mine fall into decay. Let the skin, bone and the flesh run to dissolution. Never shall this body leave the seat until the long-cherished knowledge be vouchsafed unto me.” For without such an iron determination no lofty ideal can ever be materialised into action. The whole world is convulsed to-day with a feverish excitement for political supremacy, and the muffled cry of oppressed humanity has been drowned in the clash and clatter of arms. Time has indeed come when the immortal songs of the sages and the saviours of India must be sung anew before the expectant world. Buddha has already shown the ideal which must be placed before mankind in its pristine simplicity. We must re-live that catholic ideal of universal love and freedom, carry his noble message to every door, preach the gospel of equality and fraternity and prepare the ground for the dawn of a new era of peace and brotherhood which the world needs most seriously to-day.

WIT IN PHILOSOPHY

By Swami Gnaneswarananda

"Brevity is the soul of wit," they say. Philosophers and men of religion are not people without any sense of wit and humour as they are supposed to be. In fact, if the above good old saying is true one is more apt to appreciate the finest of wits in philosophers and men of religion than in jesters and fools. Ask a real philosopher any question regarding your deepest concern of life and he will at once answer you in a couple of well-chosen and well-balanced words apparently very commonplace and simple and at the same time free from that jugglery of the confused mass of nonsense which foolish and ignorant persons give the high sounding and bewildering name of "Techniques". This is an amusing psychology of foolishness that whatever the ignorant fail to understand much less to follow, is always considered by them as something great and deep. Answer any question put to you by a fool in meaningless jargons which you yourself do not understand much less he, and you will be considered a wise man. But a real philosopher's business is not to command the fool's praise by confusing his poor understanding but to enlighten the seeker, and as such he is simple and clear both in his conduct of daily life and his utterings. If you have the patience and good sense of pondering over the brief, simple and commonplace words of such a real man of enlightenment, you are sure to realize in their brevity and simplicity the real soul of wit. The more you meditate upon them the more amusing, attractive, deep and pregnant they appear. Compare with this the frothy nonsense, the apparently amusing words of a professional entertainer—there are professional entertainers even in the field of Religion and Philosophy—and you will at once know the difference. It is indeed a pity that the world runs after false shadows, few only can know the truth!

Apropos of this I have before my mind a nice specimen of a real philosophic wit. So goes the story :—

A Pharisee, foolish in his vanity, once asked a question to a Yogin as to what a Yogin's mind was like. The Yogin was about to drink a glass of water from a crystal glass. Without thinking a moment he pointed out to the clear water in the glass and said "just like this." He drank the water and sat silent. The vain Pharisee expected a long discourse and perhaps a discussion to entertain and feed his own vanity. The Yogin had nothing more to say and showed no sign to open a discourse. The foolish Pharisee failed to see any sense in the

answer and as the Yogin did not feel any mood to talk more on the subject the Pharisee could only go home disgusted and disappointed with the impression that the man was ordinary, matter of fact, and had no sense of scholarly wit. The holy man in his turn felt very much amused at the sheer absence of good sense and wit on the part of the vain questioner although he believed that he was very wise.

Let the fool go home to his den, the philosopher is none the worse for that. But how does a real seeker, a sincere student, a real appreciator of the art of philosophic wit think about it? He is at first amused and attracted at the ready wit of the answer—it sets him thinking. And gradually in course of his patient deliberation he becomes fascinated by its prompt preciseness and finally he appreciates clearly and unmistakably the deepest and the most wholesome entertainment in the simple gesture of the simple philosopher.

"Yes," he realizes, "the Yogin's mind is precisely like that colourless, shapeless and motionless water in that crystal glass. It has absolutely no colour, no shape, no special tendency or inclination of its own. This is the reason why it can be poured into any vessel. It does not stick to anything like some gummy sticky matter. It loses nothing in the change of its environments. Having no colour or shape of its own it can at once take unto itself the colour and shape of the vessel into which it might be put, without losing anything of or doing any harm to its own intrinsic nature. Put it into a red glass—it is red in colour and has taken exactly the shape of the glass, but is intrinsically free from both. Again put it into a green cubic glass—it has become absolutely green and cubic but neither of the two in reality. Did it lose any degree or amount of its own intrinsic nature in course of these changes? Absolutely none: And why? Because it did not *attach* itself to the changing qualities of the environments. Well then, did it miss, for the reason of its being *unattached*, any fun or enjoyment under any of these changing environments? None at all: On the contrary, for the very fact of being *unattached* to any of these changing environments it could do the fullest amount of justice to each one of them by taking, without any reservation, on itself the qualities and virtues of these environments to the highest degree of possibility.

"Again, suppose you give a colour and a definite shape—say, in the form of ice—to this water. Now try again all the previous process of your experiment in the change of environments. Can it accommodate and harmonise itself with any of its changing world of environments? Does it really enjoy the fun of its different relations with its associates and relatives? Most emphatically, not: And

why? Because, having a definite colour and solid form of its own it can only break itself to fit into the form of its environment and getting there can only show itself in a mixed up colour which is neither its own nor that of the environment "

Now, to apply this illustration to our daily experiences in our work-a-day life who should be considered the most happy and harmonious, deep and true, exact and accurate in the daily relations of life—covering all phases, conditions and walks thereof? Surely a person having a *colourless* and *shapeless* mind. Such a person alone can be the ideal husband or wife, best father or mother, nicest brother or sister, the sweetest lover, the noblest friend, the most successful man of business, the greatest social worker, or the biggest of Yogins. Such a person is the most attractive, sociable and lovable in society, for whoever finds such a one always finds such exactly in the own colour of the observer. This is the secret of that attractiveness that we find in some persons. These persons have a more or less colourless and shapeless mind.

The philosopher's wit is really deep. Ponder over it and many more problems would be solved and you would find an immense source of profound knowledge. In the light of this gesture from the philosopher which do you prefer—a colourless and shapeless mind or one opposite to that? Consider thrice before you choose.

All the different Yogas—'Bhakti', 'Karma', 'Raja' and 'Jnana'—teach you to obtain and command such a mind. Do it by any means suitable to you—by one, two or more. But surely one has to do this, for there is no other way to Peace and Perfection. This is, in fact, the only means to attain that happiness and joy which everybody is seeking in vain in everything. This is the real secret of that magic word 'success' which enthuses many into activity and throws many more out of the track. Know this secret, try to attain it by sincere and honest practice and you will become really successful in life.*

INDIA AND HER PRESENT NEEDS

By Swami Sarvananda

Those of us who are bestowing any serious thought over the conditions of our national life must have been forced to acknowledge that the national life is anything but healthy. All serious thinkers of the land have come to believe that the national life is suffering from

* From the notes of a lecture delivered in the Vedanta Society of New York.

some serious ailments, and a radical cure of it is absolutely necessary for the safety of the nation. The leaders of the country are keenly divided in their diagnosis of the diseases and in their prescriptions. Some sincerely believe that the real disease of the nation lies in the political servility,—the root cause of the national decadence. The political life at every stage and every turn is retarded, and their prescription is that if the nation is to be rejuvenated, and rehabilitated in her glory, she should first attain political freedom (Swaraj). Others again there are who believe that the present state of decadence is due to certain social defects, for instance, caste system, and if the nation is to attain her healthy state these social defects must be cured; so a healthy social life is an urgent necessity for the uplift of the nation. Then again, others believe that the present state is due to the common ignorance of the people. The bulk of the people, *i.e.*, the masses, live in cottages in the villages, and the ignorance of the masses in India is simply appalling, and naturally as ignorance is always the mother of all defects so the redemption of the land depends upon the diffusion of knowledge. Then there are others who believe that the present state is due to economic defects, and the economic betterment only can lead us to the national redemption and so on.

Various prescriptions are given out by various thinkers. Seeing the problem from different angles of vision, it is but natural that they are viewing things from their own particular perspective, and with all the sincerity and intense love for the country they cannot but prescribe according to the best judgment of their own, and it must be owned that there is a grain of truth in the assertions of all these great thinkers though not the whole truth. From a study of the ancient Indian history we find that the present decadence is not wholly due to any of these causes. These may be only secondary causes, but the primary cause, the immediate cause of the national decadence, is the weakness of the manhood of the land. The manhood of the land has been weakened, and with the deterioration of that manhood has come all the disease that we find to-day in the national life. So we say that if India is to be resuscitated to her glory the first thing that is necessary is to awaken the manhood of the nation. All that is noble, all that is glorious, all that is powerful is conjured up by that one word "manliness" and has to be brought into our nation. Our blood has to be spiritualised, heart has to be strengthened and made stouter; it is to be made stronger, it is to be made more robust, and above all the spirit has to be cleansed and purified.

As students of history we all know that ancient India lived in villages and there has never been a national consciousness in the

masses in the sense of the term as it obtains at the Western world to-day, and we sometimes feel that collective consciousness, which is so important a basic principle for nationalism, is being lost sight of. A nation is formed by various forces,—geographical position, unity of culture, unity of political interest and above all racial connection. Some emphasise on the cultural aspect of nationalism, some emphasise upon religion and some upon political and some upon the racial connections. But when we study the national life and the nationalism of the West we know that modern nationalism is more or less based upon political unit or political interest. The modern America is made up of various races of Europe. There is not one race and certainly not one religion; yet they are combined under one name of American nation. The different elements of the nation have that one single political interest, and there they have developed the conception of Government as one, organised through which the entire organism of the nation works. In the West the Government is conceived as a central organ, the heart, for instance, of the body politic, through which the entire nation must work, and their whole attempt is to make Government a perfect organ. The Government must take charge of the political aspirations of the people, the economic growth of the people, the culture, the education, and even religion. It is the duty of the Government, in their view, to look after all the needs of the people, to minister all requirements of the people, even religion, until Government becomes an all-absorbing interest to the Western mind.

We, imbued with the Western ideals, think to-day that our nation's rejuvenation cannot be made possible without establishing that perfect Government. But that was not the case in ancient India. In India the conception of nationalism was quite different. Our nationalism was more or less a cultured nationalism; we used to call ourselves Aryans. From the remote corner of Kashmir or Assam down to Cape Comorin wherever an Aryan went he did not feel that he was amongst foreigners. In ancient India there were imperial cities; there were kings and emperors ruling over different parts of the world. As we all know from the study of history that many a king came and went away, and from the structure they were thrown down, but there was a feeling that the national life was to be left undisturbed. It was possible only in India that a peasant would till his soil, that a philosopher would go on with his philosophy, even in the midst of the booming of cannon and the clatter of arms. It was possible here and so the political cataclysm did not disturb even, at any rate, the smooth tenor of our national life. The nation lived in spite of the changes of the rulers. So it is really a wonder for

historians and sociologists how in spite of thousands of years of political decadence India still survives. India saw the pyramids of Pharaohs, India saw Cæsar making his conqueror's march, India saw the rise and fall of Athens and Greece, but India still survives and Greece lives only a small land! Rome lives only as a historical memory. Egypt lives to-day in desert, in the form of pyramids! All these are gone, swallowed in the waves of time, but India still survives in spite of the changes. Why? Because it had such tremendous strength of soul, such tremendous power in its culture, that all these political changes could not touch her, and it is time for us to understand the Indian nationhood,—this Indian nationalism.

To-day 330 million souls of India are being governed by only a handful of English people! Most of the loyal Indians are mere instruments in the hands of the Government and are being used one against the other to subserve their political ends. There is no doubt a little stir and commotion in the political life of India, but in view of the grip the Bureaucracy has upon the destiny of the people, the agitation seems to be of no practical utility unless the forces of India's cultural life are mobilised to keep up the flame of her nationalism. The soul of India spoke through Mahatmaji and it was he who in a way materialised the dream of Mr. Gokhale. It was the Mahatma who could conceive the soul of India and could spiritualise the Indian dream of the Western conception of politics. As in politics so also in industry and education. All the failures and decadence in industry are due to the deceit and want of character on the part of either the Directors or the Managers. We have no sense of responsibility; we have not the sense of honesty, and that is the reason why whenever there is a joint stock company here, it sooner or later comes to grief. So far as the education of the land is concerned, the best minds have already been too much stuffed with Western notions and ideals, with the result that a hybrid culture without having the necessary sanction of our spiritual civilisation has now come to stay in the land. The ancient idealism and cultural purity have altogether been lost sight of and the national life has thus become completely stranded without the hope of an early emancipation. Religion has degenerated to an woeful extent. There are four kinds of people who worship God: the man suffering, the man needing money, the philosopher enquiring after the truth, and lastly the *Jnani* (seer). Of these, the *Jnani* is the highest, and the philosopher comes next, but the number of sincere devotees is almost negligible.

Thus we see from every standpoint that there has been a national deterioration, and with this deterioration and with these defects it is not possible for us to gain anything. As Swami Vivekananda said: 'This earth is to be enjoyed by the great heroes, and unless you

be heroes, how you can dream to get the mastery of your own land? You cannot get the mastery of your own body; how can you get the mastery of your land? Cowardliness is the root cause of our national decadence. When Swami Vivekananda returned from America after his world experience, he was asked what was his religion, and what he was going to preach to India. He said: one religion that India needs to-day is the religion of manliness; you must be man first and then anything else. Your path to heaven will be open not by closing the doors but by fighting the battle. So from whatever standpoint we may see, the first thing that is necessary appears to us is the rejuvenation of the manliness of India. This vitalisation of the nation can be made possible by two means, as a man can be vitalised, and strengthened by two or three ways. You can vitalise the body by giving all kinds of nourishments, all kinds of tonics and so on, but if you look upon a man as nothing but a psychological entity, then your nourishment should take the form of ideas and education. If you see him as a spiritual entity, then the process of this nourishment or vitalising will be the awakening of spiritual consciousness. In spite of the great conquering power of the Grecians and Romans, they could not live many centuries together. They had to die. And sometimes the Hindus have been given the appellation of being mild. Sometimes Westerners say that Hindus have never been a conquering nation; what have the Hindus done? the Hindus are mild and have never been conquering heroes. To that we have the best reply: in our manliness lies the grandeur of our lives. We never thought of conquest and of becoming rich by plundering our neighbours. The conquest of the West is synonymous with the exploitation of the weaker nations, the pillaging and robbing of weaklings. The Westerners are trying to adopt all possible means to strengthen their physical life, their physical power and intellectual power, for it furthers their spectacular grandeur; but it is bound to be short-lived, as the European nations are changing one after the other. And it is needless to state that the nations who have been trumpotting their power so much for more than 100 years must go away as the deterioration of the intellect of Europe is already so much in evidence.

If we want to vitalise our nation purely from the physical standpoint, we will be committing the same mistake as the Europeans have done. Similarly if we want to vitalise our nation purely from intellectual standpoint we will be committing again the same mistake. Moreover it will be different from the genius of our race. The Hindus, perhaps except China, are the most ancient nation in the world. The Hindu civilisation,—Hindu culture—is perhaps the most ancient, and this national culture has come down to us, gathering momentum and

reaching itself deeply in the inner consciousness of the people. Do you mean to say that we can leave it off easily? It is easier perhaps for the icy region of the Himalayas to go down to the ocean to start back afresh; you can ask the Ganges at Calcutta to return back to its icy source, but it is not easy for the nation that has passed through several centuries in a particular way of life to recede. The blood of the Rishis is still in our veins: however we may consider we can never get ourselves alienated from the blood that we have inherited. We can never denationalise India by such political or other means.

The only way of revitalising India is to develop her spiritual consciousness and the path that Swamiji has showed for the rejuvenation of India is the development of the *Atmic* consciousness. We have to develop the consciousness that we are not all the body, we are not the lump of flesh, we are not a dying and decaying element, but we are an undying and undecaying element, one *Atman*. But the predominant thing the Mahatma preaches to-day is the soul-force. This soul-force is the *Atmic* power; this *Atmic* consciousness has to be rejuvenated, and reawakened in ourselves. The *Atma* is undying and undecaying: no fire can burn it, no sword can cut it, no water can drown it. It is eternal. If we can have that strong doctrine, if we can awaken that soul force in us, everything else would be perfectly smooth and easy for us. Only we have to awaken our soul-force. Vedanta denies the separate existence of matter. It is the mind that images the body, and it is the soul that images the mind. We have seen so many instances in the lives of great saints (sages) that their body becomes their slaves; and matter becomes their slaves. In fact the matter is the shadow of spirit. If that spiritual feeling is awakened, all the other defects of the mental and physical body would get themselves corrected. As when the water falls from the higher peaks of the Himalayas, it goes down to several channels to fertilise lower soils; many cities, towns and villages are watered by the water that falls from the high peaks; so when our spiritual life is attuned to the consciousness of the ultimate reality of the self, all the other activities of life will get vitalised; mind will become cleaner, and stronger, soul will become adamant and the body would be capable of doing the command of the soul.

Even Swamiji used to say that if we wish to bring back our Upanishads in our midst, the truths of the Upanishads should be brought to us first. The great truth of the Vedanta has to be brought out from the forest, from the sannyasins, and has to be preached and practised by the grihasthas, be he a peasant, or a judge ruling from the Bench, or a governor, or in whatever position he may be; he has to

practise, observe and get himself imbued with the truths of Vedanta, and there lies the real hope of India. The real manliness will develop with the awakening of spiritual consciousness, and the spiritual consciousness will reflect itself upon the mind and body. It will invigorate not only physical muscles, it will invigorate not only the mind, it will not only make the intellect keener, but it will give that strength to the man, which triumphs over all physical impediments in the world.

India has to choose either of the two : the material culture of the West or the spiritual culture of the East. As the former is quite ill-suited to the temper and genius of India the only alternative for her is to resort to the latter one : to develop spiritual strength in us, to show to the world that our spiritual culture is superior to all. The Hindu lives for the safety of the whole world. The other parts of the world are still groping in the dark. All the inarticulate voices of the West in the form of democracy and socialism, etc., are but the unconscious hankering of the Western soul for something superior to their own politics, for something superior to their so-called democracy, their so-called autocracy. Today India is not Hindu India, today India is not Mohammedan India, nor Christian India. Indian affairs have become very complex ; Indian nation is but an aggregate of different cultures, different religions, different races, different temperaments ; and if India can solve the problem of politics India would be solving the problem of the whole world ; and owing to the fact of such varying interests, currents and cross-currents of thought, it is not absolutely possible to settle or solve the problem of Indian national life, political, economic or anything. There is one thing in which all these different elements are synchronised, in which all the varying principles can seek profound harmony, it is spirituality. From the very ancient times the Indians preached this unity of life ; and the solidarity of man can only be realised if this gospel of unity is put above all the different problems of the world, social, political, economic, etc.

The same universal life is throbbing in every heart ; we must feel it, and bring that feeling to bear upon our work. Let us therefore all try to rehabilitate our glorious heritage, and reinstall our God in our own hearts in the form of that very Self—the one unifying bond in this world of variety, and the problems that confront us to-day shall be solved once for all.

INDIAN METAPHYSICS

(Continued from the May issue)

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.

CHAPTER III: THE HIGH WATERMARK OF INDIAN METAPHYSICS : THE BHAGAVAD GITA

I would take up, therefore, the faith of the Epics, and especially of the Bhagavad Gita before dealing with Jainism and Buddhism. Dr. Radhakrishnan swallows wholesale the myths of modern Western scholarship about the Aryans and Dravidians,—myths which were exposed and disproved by Swami Vivekananda. He says: "Some of the later Upanishads describe the attempts to build up a Vedic religion on non-Aryan symbolism. The Pasupata, the Bhagavatha, and the Tantrik developments belong to this period of social upheaval through which the Aryanisation of vast multitudes in pre-Buddhistic India proceeded." It seems to me that the setting up of an Aryan-Dravidian conflict in the realms of social and political life is itself a myth. It is a yet greater myth to set up a philosophic conflict as well. The root ideas of our Itihasas and Puranas and Tantras and Agamas occur in the Upanishads. Each age emphasised one aspect of the many-faceted Truth revealed in the Vedas. Dr. Radhakrishnan outruns his fleet-footed Western brethren when he says about the Mahabharata story: "The original event seems to be a non-Aryan one, if we may judge from the blood thirst of Bhima, the polyandry of Draupadi, and such other incidents." When dealing with the religion of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (the author reverses their usual order), we have in his account a summation of the views of Western scholarship. Here is a sample: "The dance of Krishna on the head of Kaliya means the suppression of the worship of nagas or serpents by that of Krishna. The defeat of Indra by Krishna symbolises the suppression of Vedic orthodoxy by the Vishnu cult. The henotheistic tendency is still prevalent." Dr. Max Muller's new-coined word 'henotheism' reflects a misunderstanding of Vedic doctrine. The Western savants are genuinely puzzled by the Vedic exaltation of each deity as the Supreme Deity. The same exaltation is found in later religious literature in regard to the Trimurtis, the Devi cult, etc. We can never realise the spirit underlying these declarations unless we have the master-key furnished by the great Rig Vedic declaration '*Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanthi*'. The Supreme God has taken various manifestations to approach man and to be approached

by man. Dr. Radhakrishnan thinks that image worship and pilgrimage were introduced in the epic period. The root ideas about these matters also are found in the Upanishads. The author quite naturally regards Durga as a non-Aryan goddess brought into the Aryan heart and married there to Rudra. Uma is at least as old as the Kena Upanishad. The Devisukta also is equally well-known. The author naturally accepts also the alleged equation of Siva with Rudra and of Krishna with Vishnu and Narayana and Vasudeva who had somehow become equated to each other. There are yet more fantastic theories. Krishna was Ghora Angirasa's son and was hence a Vedic thinker. In the Rig Veda he is spoken of as a Non-Aryanchief waiting on the banks of the Amrawathi with an army of ten thousand men to fight Indra. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar believes that a nomadic tribe of cowherds called Abhiras were worshippers of a boy-god. Weber and Dutt contend that the Pandavas were a non-Aryan people. Dr. Radhakrishnan makes an amalgam of all this and says: "In the Mahabharata we have a combination of all traditions about Krishna that survived till then, a non-Aryan hero, a spiritual teacher, and a tribal god." This is not all. The Svetadwipa episode in the Mahabharata is regarded by Weber and Dr. Seal as referring to a contact between Hinduism and Christianity. Fortunately Garbe and Barth have overthrown the view. The name Vasudeva occurs in Panini's grammar which cannot be put below the 7th century B. C. The Buddhist and Jaina scriptures refer to the Bhakti cult. Dr. Radhakrishnan, fortunately for us, negatives the acceptability of the perverted inference from the Svetadwipa episode.

The ancient and unwavering Indian view is that the Epics (Ithihasas and Puranas) implement and amplify the Vedic doctrine. The epic cosmology agrees with the Upanishadic view that Brahman is the material cause and the efficient cause of the world. The Epics accept and elaborate the Upanishadic doctrine of the Gunas. The Epics elaborate the Vedic doctrine of the Purusharthas. The Vedic ideal of ethics is accepted and elaborated and amply illustrated in the Epics.

We can therefore easily realise why the Bhagavad Gita is said in a famous Sanskrit stanza to be the milk extracted from the Upanishadic cows by the divine cowherd. The Mahabharata is regarded as the fifth Veda and the Gita is its Upanishad. The Hindu believes that God who revealed the Veda incarnated as Sri Krishna to lead the world from the chaos of thought into the true Vedic doctrine once again. It is therefore improper to imagine and then seek to find in the Gita any divergence or departure from the Vedas as well as Ithihasas and the Puranas which explain and amplify and implement the Vedic doctrine. The Gita has fascinated the mind of the West no

less than the mind³ of the East. William Von Humboldt says that it is "the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue". H. E. Sampson says in a recent work on the Gita: "If good people, looking for a 'coming teacher' to incarnate in the flesh, would escape that snare of delusion, and seek for Krishna, the Master, Iswara, in themselves, the world would be wiser, happier and lovelier than a thousand 'coming teachers' would make it." In strange contrast with this is Dr. Radhakrishnan's description: "The author is a man of deep culture, catholic rather than critical." This is of a piece with his reference to the Upanishads in the following sentence: "The thin abstractions of the Upanishads would not satisfy the many-sided needs of the soul."

Dr. Radhakrishnan seems to think that the Gita is a post-Buddhistic work. It is not possible to agree with this view at all. It is wrong as his view that the Katha Upanishad quotes from the Gita, (Vol. I, p. 142). Even the learned author assigns the Gita to the fifth century B. C. Further, the Gita belongs to the time of the Mahabharata war. Such at any rate is the consensus of Indian opinion on the point. Professor S. N. Das Gupta says in the issue of the "Modern Review" for July 1928, that the Gita is pre-Buddhistic. It is not possible to go here into the vexed question about the date of the Mahabharata war and of the composition of the Mahabharata. Suffice it to say here that these are certainly much older than Buddhism. It is hence impossible to accept Dr. Radhakrishnan's view that "the Gita adopts the ethical principles of Buddhism". This is further wrong because the author is wrong in his view that "in the descriptions of the ideal man the Gita and Buddhism agree". The Buddhist ideal of the ideal man, as I shall show below, is the ideal of ethics divorced from religion and is devoid of the warm tints of devotion and the concentrated white glow of spiritual realisation and divine consciousness.

In the same way it is not proper to imagine an indebtedness of the Gita to the Samkhya and Yoga Darśanas. These Darśanas were subsequent to the Gita. The Vedānta Sūtras frequently refer to Gita passages as Smṛiti and cite them as authority to enforce the statements of its doctrine. The fact is that all the later crystallised systems with their common points as well as points of departure are traceable to the ancient and eternal and infinite mine of the Vedas, especially the Upanishads. The Gita has given to us the perfect synthesis of the separate truths revealed by the Upanishadic seer. The Hindus believe that God who gave the Vedas as the chart of man's voyage through the ocean of life (*samsara*) gave the Gita as the synthesis and summation of all the highest spiritual truths by lips divine. If modern scholar-

ship demonstrates the untenability of this view and shows that the Gita merely shows the undigested eclecticism of an able individual scholar who composed and shoved the Gita into the Mahabharata, if it shows that it is later than Buddhism or the six Darasanas and is a magnificent failure in its attempt to reconcile the unreconciled and irreconcilable, then it will be time enough to scrap the traditional view and follow our great new guides. But modern scholarship, be it European or Indian, has not demonstrated any such thing at all.

The Gita is the greatest of all the gospels. It reveals the Truth in all its many-sided beauty and shows the gradation of steps by which we can realise and attain Godhead. Its synthesis of Karma-yoga and Raja-yoga and Bhakti-yoga and Jnana-yoga is the most wonderful synthesis of all the means and methods leading us to God. Like the Upanishads it is the soul of religion and not a petrified system of dogma and creed. It is incandescent with the glow of mystic spiritual emotion and can kindle such emotion in every fervent and prayerful heart. Dr. Radhakrishnan is wrong in imagining a disparateness between it and the Upanishads and saying that "it attempts to derive a religion from the Upanishad philosophy". The truth is that the final and perfect fusion of philosophy and religion is found in both the Veda and the Gita. Both are aglow with feeling and show also the cold light of reason. Both lead us to the bliss of spiritual liberation from the non-self. Both dower us with that vision, that insight, by which we know our true nature and therefore also the true nature of other souls, of nature and of God. Both lead us to unselfish and God-surrounded action which brings us peace and devotion and vision. Both form the meeting point of poetry and philosophy and religion about which Plotinus says: "There are different roads by which this end (of spiritual apprehension) may be reached: the love of beauty which exalts the poet; that devotion to the One and that ascent of science which wakes the ambition of the philosopher; that love and those prayers by which some devout and ardent soul tends in its moral purity towards perfection. These are the great highways conducting to that height above the actual and the particular, where we stand in the immediate presence of the Infinite, who shines out as from the depths of the soul." In the Gita we stand in such immediate presence of the Infinite, the presence where we have God the Yogeswara (the Master and Lord of all yogas) with the obedient and illuminated and beloved human soul ready to carry out His commands and realise His glory (अनुर्थः). Only when we want such a combination can there be individual and national and universal auspiciousness and victory and prosperity and righteousness:

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिप्रधानीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

CHAPTER IV: THE EBB OF INDIAN METAPHYSICS

It is not possible to pursue the exposition of the Gita further here. The heretic systems such as materialism, Jainism, and Buddhism arose later on. They signify not an advance but points of departure in the history of Hindu thoughts. The restraints and disciplines of the Aryan religion were felt galling and there were attempts to break away therefrom. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The sickly-minded and the suffering of reduced vitality and weak nerves the world over try to heal their sickness by either seeking repose and calm, deliverance and nirvana through art, knowledge, morality, or else intoxication, ecstasy, bewildorment and madness.....There were also political crises which unsettled men's minds." This is picturesque and also true in some measure but does not contain a full statement of all the root causes. The revolts against ethical and spiritual discipline cannot be always traced to geographical or historical causes alone. The history of philosophic and religious progress, like the history of human progress in general, has many ups and downs, many forward and circular and eddying and even backward movements which are not always traceable to definite external causes.

If it is permissible to hazard a theory about the matter, I would urge that the national suicide of Hindu culture in the Mahabharata war was the cause of the disintegration of India's outer life as well as her inner life. Just as the Ramayana is the epic of Indian unity and its vitalising power, the Mahabharata is the epic of Indian disunion and its devitalising power. Arjuna cried on the field of battle: स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव—(O Madhava, how shall we attain happiness after killing our own people?). He referred also to कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रदोहे च पातकम् (the evil of destruction of families and the sin of hatred and injury to friends and comrades). He cried out further:

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मो नष्टे कुले कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥

(When families die, the eternal family dharmas die; when dharma dies, adharma ruins entire families). It was this inevitable result which happened as the result of the national suicide. Adharma ruined the land and the culture. The outer sovereignty passed away from the God-appointed guardians of the national dharma; and the inner sovereignty passed away from the God-given scripture, at least for a while. At

the time of the sorest need, Lord Krishna Himself protected the dharma. Later on, His chosen ones reintegrated the Vedic doctrine after its disintegration by the heretical systems of thought.

The classical division of the Indian systems of philosophy is into the six *avaidika* darsanas and the six Vaidika darsanas. The former six deny God and Veda; the latter six affirm God and Veda. The former are the Charvaka system, the Jaina system, and the Buddhist system with its four subdivisions, *viz.*, the Vaibhashika, the Sautrantika, the Yogachara, and the Madhyamika. The latter are the Nyaya, the Vaisheshika, the Samkhya, the Yoga, the Purva Mimamsa, called also the Karma Mimamsa, and the Uttara Mimamsa called also the Brahma Mimamsa. The Avaidika systems were in vogue for some-time but were later on superseded and overthrown by the reasserted power of the Vaidika systems of Indian philosophy.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON CHILD MARRIAGE AND "THE SANATANIST"

Among the social questions that at present agitate the minds of the leaders of the Hindu community, the question of child marriage seems to be the most important one, especially in view of the fact that a Bill for its prevention is at present under consideration in the Legislative Assembly. The orthodox sections all over the country are raising a great hue and cry against the Bill and are busy marshalling the authority of the scriptures and of sages, both ancient and modern, to make out a case for their opposition. An instance to the point is the editorial of the Sanatanist of the 25th of March, 1929, wherein the learned Editor quotes a passage from the writings of Swami Vivekananda to contradict the statement of a certain lady named Mrs. G. Sumathi Bai that the Swami Vivekananda along with other great men like Ram Mohun Roy and Mahatma Gandhi has condemned the custom of child-marriage. The Editor also remarks that "it may be possible to catch a few snap-shots from the Swami's inspired writings and speeches favourable to her by tearing them from their context". But we can assure the learned Editor that no such mean trick is necessary to show that Swamiji was against this custom, as there are many clear passages in his writings wherein he condemns it in most uncompromising terms. We propose to quote below at length and with full context a few of such passages to remove misconceptions that may be created by the quotation of the Editor of the Sanatanist.

Before doing that we deem it proper to make a few remarks about the passage quoted by the Editor to suit his purpose. He has, as we find from his own acknowledgement, quoted from the Brahma-vaadin of December, 1897 and not from the Mayavati Memorial Edition which is the most authoritative edition of Swamiji's works. As it appears in the Brahma-vaadin, the passage in question differs in certain important respects from what we find in the Mayavati Memorial Edition of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda

Vol. III ; page 408-9. Wherever the expression "child marriage" is used in the Sanatanist and the Brahmavadin, we find only "marriage" and the "marriage system" in the authoritative Mayavati Memorial Edition. From the quotation given below the difference would be quite clear to the readers: "And as these bodies become more and more finely organised, as the *Tamo guna* becomes the *Rajo guna*, and as the *Rajo guna* becomes *Sattva guna*, more and more of this power and purity becomes manifest, and therefore it is that our people have been so careful about eating and drinking, and the food question. It may be that the original ideas have been lost, just as with *our marriage* (Cf. 'child marriage' in the Sanatanist)—which, though not belonging to the subject, I may take as an example. If I have another opportunity I will talk to you about this ; but let me tell you now that the *ideas behind our marriage system* (Cf. 'ideas behind child marriage' in the Sanatanist) are the only ideas through which there can be a real civilisation. There cannot be anything else. If a man or a woman were allowed the freedom to take up any woman or man as wife or husband, if individual pleasure, if satisfaction of animal instincts, were to be allowed to run loose in society, the result must be evil, evil children, wicked and demoniacal. Aye, man in every country is on the one hand, producing these brutal children, and on the other hand multiplying the police force to keep these brutes down. The question is not how to destroy evil that way, but how to prevent the very birth of evil, and so long as you live in society your marriage certainly affects every member of it; and therefore society has the right to dictate whom you shall marry, and whom you shall not. And great ideas of this kind have been behind *the system of marriage* here, (Cf. 'child marriage here' in the Sanatanist) what they call the astrological *Jati* of the bride and bridegroom. And in passing I may remark that according to Manu a child who is born of lust is not an Aryan. The child whose very conception and whose birth are according to the rules of the Vedas, such is an Aryan. Yes, and less of these Aryan children are being produced in the country and the result is the mass of evil, which we call *Kali Yuga*. But we have lost all these ideals ; it is true we cannot carry all these ideas to the fullest length now; it is perfectly true we have made almost a caricature of some of these great ideas. It is lamentably true that the fathers and mothers are not what they were in old times, neither is society so educated as it used to be, neither has society that love for individuals that it used to have. But, however faulty the working out may be, the principle is sound ; and if its application has been defective, if one method has failed, take up the principle and work it out better ; why kill the principle ?"

The difference in certain places, which we have indicated in the quotation given above, must surely be due to some mistake in the report or wilful interpolation in the Brahmavadin. This seems to be the case, especially in view of the fact that the purport of the passage is not to justify child marriage, but to show that the principle underlying the Hindu marriage is not the satisfaction of animal cravings, but the begetting of virtuous children. Swamiji has no objection to changes being introduced in the marriage system according to the needs of the time, but this underlying principle should be maintained. That Swamiji was a staunch opponent of the system of child marriage will be amply clear from the following quotations from his letters and from his dialogues, recorded by some of his orthodox householder disciples.

In a letter from Chicago, dated 28th December 1893, Swamiji writes, comparing the conditions of Indian women with those of American women : ".....And what are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral. What does our Manu enjoin? 'Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons.' As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents". (Vide M. M. Edition, Complete Works, Part V, page 22—23).

Speaking to Sj. Surendranath Sen on Monday, the 24th January 1898, Swamiji says as follows, concerning the early marriage of girls :—

Q.—May I ask you, sir, what is your opinion about early marriage?

Swamiji :—Amongst the educated classes in Bengal, the custom of marrying the boys too early is dying out gradually. The girls are also given in marriage a year or two older than before, but that has been under compulsion,—from pecuniary want. Whatever might be the reason for it, the age of marrying girls should be raised still higher. But what will the poor father do? As soon as the girl grows up a little every one of the female sex, beginning from the mother down to the relatives and neighbours even, will begin to cry out that he must find a bridegroom for her, and will not leave him in peace until he does so! And, about your religious hypocrites, the less said the better. In these days no one hears them, but still they will take up the role of leaders themselves. The rulers passed the Age of Consent Bill prohibiting a man, under the threat of penalty, to live with a girl of twelve years, and at once all these so-called leaders of your religion raised a tremendous hue and cry against it, sounding the alarm, "Alas, our religion is lost!" As if religion consists in making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen! So the rulers also naturally think, "Goodness gracious! What a religion is theirs! And these people lead political agitations and demand political rights!"

Q.—Then in your opinion, both men and women should be married at an advanced age?

Swamiji :—Certainly. But education should be imparted along with it, otherwise, irregularity and corruption will ensue.....We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on his own feet. (Vide M. M. Edition, Complete Works vol. V, pages 256 and 257).

In his conversations with Sj. Sarat Chandra Chakravarty (*Cf.* Dialogue XXX, Page 216 of Volume VII, M. M. Edition) Swamiji, speaking about his plan for a female Math with a school for the education of girls, says, with reference to the girl students : "...But there must be this rule that the guardians of the students in the female Math must not even think of marrying them before they attain the age of fifteen."

In his conversations with the same gentleman at Calcutta in March 1897 (Vide Pages 447-448, Complete Works Vol. VI) Swamiji holds the following conversation about the marriage of girls :

Swamiji:—...Such educated men are not yet born in this country who can keep their girls unmarried without fear of social punishment.....Only the other day, when the Age of Consent Bill was being passed the leaders of society massed together millions of men to send up the cry, "We don't want the Bill";—had this been in any other country, far from getting up meetings to send forth a cry like that, people would have hidden their heads under their roofs in shame that such a calumny could yet stain their society.

Disciple:—But, Sir, I don't think the ancient law-givers could support this custom without any rhyme or reason. There must be some secret meaning in this attitude of theirs.

Swamiji:—Well, what may be this secret meaning, please?

Disciple:—Take it for instance, in the first place that if the girls are married in an early age they may come over to their husband's home to learn the peculiar ways and usages of the family from the early years of their life. They may acquire adequate skill in the duties of the household under the guidance of their parents-in-law. In the homes of their own parents, on the other hand, there is the likelihood of grown-up daughters going astray. But married early, they have no chance of thus going wrong, and over and above this, such feminine virtues as modesty, reserve, fortitude and diligence are apt to develop in them.

Swamiji:—In favour of the other side of the questions, again, it may be argued that early marriage leads to premature child-bearing, which accounts for most of our women dying early; their progeny also, being of low vitality go to swell the ranks of our country's beggars; for if the physique of the parents be not strong and healthy, how can strong and healthy children be born at all? Married a little later and bred in culture, our mothers will give birth to children who would be able to achieve real good in the country. The reason why you have so many widows in every home lies here, in this custom of early marriage....."

Disciple:—But, sir, it seems to me, if our women are married late in life they are apt to be less mindful of their household duties....."

Swamiji:—.....Our part of the duty lies in imparting true education to all men and women in society. As an outcome of that education, they will of themselves be able to know what is good for them and what is bad and will spontaneously eschew the latter.....

Disciple:—What sort of education is suited to our women?

Swamiji:—Religion, arts, science, house-keeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene—the simple essential points in these subjects ought to be taught to our women. It is not good to let them touch novels and fictions..... Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with a devotion for lofty principles of selflessness. The noble examples of Sita, Savitri Damayanti, Lilavati, Khana, and Mira should be brought home to their minds and they should be inspired to mould their own lives in the light of these.

Concerning the education of women Swamiji has many more things to say, but we shall quote here only one important suggestion

of his, which occurs in the same conversation with Sj. Surendranath Sen, that we have already referred to in another place. It runs as follows:—

“.....To make a beginning in women's education : Our Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because it is their heritage. Now, first of all intensify that ideal within them above everything else, so that they may develop a strong character by the force of which, in every stage of their lives, whether married, or single if they prefer to remain so, they will not be in the least afraid even to give up their lives rather than flinch an inch from their chastity. Is it little heroism to be able to sacrifice one's life for the sake of one's ideal whatever that ideal may be ?”

We fear we have given rather too long quotations, but considering the importance of the subject we feel that it is not improper to be a little exhaustive. In conclusion we may summarise Swamiji's view on the question by stating (1) that child marriage is an evil, (2) that if it has contributed to the purity of women in any way, it has also been responsible for the physical degeneration of the race, (3) that the right way of preserving the purity of women is to give them proper sort of education, (4) and that the intensification of the idea of chastity and purity should form the essential feature of this right type of education for women.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Krishna of Brindavan : by Krishnadas ; published by Bengal Library, Patuatuly, Dacca : Price Rs. 6. Page 601.

One of the greatest needs of India at the present day, both from the national as well as the spiritual points of view, is a correct and appreciative interpretation of the glorious contribution of the ancients in a language that could be understood by the modern mind. The author of this book under review who styles himself as Krishnadas has accomplished this task as far as one aspect of Indian religious tradition is concerned. He gives in a language so simple, yet so lucid and so luminous, a most fascinating presentation of the personality and the pastoral life of Sri Krishna at Brindavan and a most scholarly exposition of the philosophy of Love which has been built round him by Sri Chaitanya and other great Vaishnava saints and scholars of Bengal. The philosophical dissertation which deals with the various stages and signs of Divine Love, of the ways of acquiring it, and of the personalities of the Divine Lovers, Sri Krishna, Sri Radha and the Gopees (milkmaids) of Brindavan has been vivified by the English renderings of some of the sweetest and most enthralling of Vaishnavite songs depicting the love-madness of Sri Radha and the Gopees, and by the translations of inspired and stirring passages from Chaitanyacharitamrita, and the writings of Vaishnavite Acharyas like Sri Rupa Goswami, Sri Jiva Goswami, Sri Viswanath Chakravartthy and Sri Naroththama Das. The book concludes with a chapter containing a very warm appreciation of 'Holy Krishna' by a Mohammedan saint, and nine valuable appendices dealing with some interesting and thought-provoking subjects.

We feel that the spontaneous love which the Gopees had for Sri Krishna will be much appreciated at the present day, especially as it

stands in striking contrast to the spirit of mean calculation and commercialism of the modern age. The Gopees loved Sri Krishna not because they expected any reward from him or wanted to satisfy their sexual appetite ; for the very consciousness of the body and its wants disqualifies a person for having that pure form of Love. The thought of him alone was sufficient to enrapture their whole being to such an extent as to make them lose every form of physical consciousness. The burning passion of their heart was to be in his presence and to minister to his happiness ; and for this they dedicated their whole self, body, mind, and soul, forsaking their hearth and homes, their dear and near ones, and all ideas of family prestige, virtue, vice, etc. There was no return for this whole-hearted self-surrender except that the Beloved graciously accepted the same ; nor was there a demand for any. For the very thought of being serviceable to their Beloved was enough to satisfy the Gopees and to madden them to a frenzy of Supreme Bliss. This is the central idea of the states of *Rati* (nascent love), *Prema* (holy love) *Bhava* (supreme love) and *Mahabhava* (transcendent love) which the author delineates in their various aspects and sub-divisions. His exposition of this theme, we feel, will stand as a challenge to those persons, Indian as well as foreign, who depreciate and blacken the personalities and the holy love of Radha-Krishna, simply because they have not the instinct to feel its potent influence, or because they are steeped in the brutish cravings of lust and greed. We hope the public will extend to this book the patronage which it richly merits.

The Religion We Need : by S. Radhakrishnan of the Calcutta University. Ernest Benn Limited, Bouverie House, Fleet Street, London. Price one shilling net.

In this small book Dr Radhakrishnan gives a brief exposition of the modern criticism of the old idea of God, and tries to give a scientific interpretation of the position of the theists in answer to the agnostic conclusions of modern thinkers. As the foundation of his faith he takes the theory of some of the modern savants that evolution is not a blind and mechanical change, but is due to the work of an inner directing principle. The religion he advocates does not consist in the acceptance of academic abstractions, in the celebration of ceremonies, in sentimental adoration, or in a vague social idealism. On the other hand it is a process of self-control, of deep meditation and of strenuous self-discipline. Its culmination is the realisation of the ideal of universal brotherhood. We hope that this interpretation will meet with the approval of many modern minds.

Indian Christians : published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Rs. 3 only.

Messrs. G. A. Natesan and Co. have brought out this book as a companion volume to their book of sketches of Eminent Mussalmans. Short biographical sketches of fourteen prominent Indian Christians like Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Rev. Lal Behari Day, Michael Madhusudana Datta, Kali Charan Banerjee, Pandita Ramabai, L. D. Swamikannu Pillai, Sushil Kumar Rudra, Sadhu Sundar Singh and several others are included in this book. A perusal of their lives will reveal to every one the brightest aspects of the results achieved by the preaching of Christianity in India. And the generality of Indian Christians who still show some sort of outlandish sympathies may very well

learn from these leaders of their community that Christianity and adherence to Indian national ideals are not in any way incompatible with each other. We wish the book a wide circulation which it rightly deserves.

NEWS AND REPORTS

It is with a heavy heart and a deep sense of loss that we announce the passing away of Srimat Swami Kamalananda, one of the devoted workers of our Mission. He joined the Order some ten years back and worked in the R. K. Mission Home of Service, Benares, for about 4 years to the entire satisfaction of all. His services were afterwards availed of for more than three years in the interior of the Himalyas at the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary in the District of Almora. It was during his stay there that, while attending an indoor tuberculosis patient for months together, he caught the infectious disease, which ultimately necessitated his removal to the Government Tuberculosis Hospital, Royapettah, Madras, for proper treatment. There was a distinct improvement of his health during his residence in this Hospital, and after his discharge he spent almost a year without any symptom of the disease. But as ill luck would have it, there was a sudden relapse of the fatal malady a few months back, and in spite of the best medical aid available from Calcutta the Swami expired on the 4th of May last at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Belur. Needless to say, the Swami by his charming personality, loving service and his unswerving devotion to the ideal endeared himself to all, young and old. His passing away from our midst at this juncture when the services of such noble souls and tried workers are most seriously needed, has proved a veritable blow to the Mission. We pray that his soul that knew no rest may enjoy eternal peace in the bosom of the Lord.

ACTIVITIES OF THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF PORTLAND, OREGON, U. S. A.

Since the outline of the activities of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, under the leadership of Swami Prabhavananda in March 1928, many interesting changes have been made for the growth of the society and the members individually. Regular classes and lectures continued with a steady attendance and sustained interest. During the third week of June and at the time of the Rose Festival which is an annual city festival in Portland, Swami Madhavananda of San Francisco visited the Society. It was a great treat when he lectured to large classes that week and to a crowded house in the evening of June 24th. The second fortnight of July was spent by Swami Prabhavananda in California. After visiting friends in San Francisco he went to Los Angeles and Alhambra, California, where he spent the major portion of his vacation period. Several lectures were delivered in the California centres. Upon his return to Portland Swami Prabhavananda delivered a comprehensive series of lectures upon the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sunday Morning Service hour. This series covered some three months and was deeply appreciated by all the students whose privilege it was to hear it. The classes for members continued with studies of the Gospel according to St. John and of the Isha Upanishad. Upon the completion of the studies from the Bible the Swami began interpreting, at the Friday evening classes, "Vivekachudamani" of Sri Sankaracharya. This

study will continue through the remainder of the present year. With the beginning of 1929 Swami Prabhavananda began a second study of the Gita.

Early in January of this year by unanimous decision of the official board, the location of the Society's Headquarter was changed. A fine hall for the Sunday services was procured in the new Studio Building which has recently been constructed for the housing of musicians and allied artists. Adjoining the hall another smaller room very comfortably and tastefully furnished has been secured for the week day classes, personal conferences, etc. With the opening of the new quarters Swami Prabhavananda has inaugurated two new activities. He has generously donated his personal library, consisting almost completely of books not available for the American reading public, to be used in a reading room (the regular class room) which is open on afternoons every day in the week except on Sundays. Swami Prabhavananda holds an informal question and discussion class on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons of each week. As a result of these changes and activities the membership has increased and all classes and lectures are better attended than ever before in the history of the society. Since early in January announcements of the public lectures have been made by Radio over one of the largest broadcasting stations in the city and advertising has been carried in the two leading daily papers. This, we feel, has helped to create a more general interest. The birthdays of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna were observed publicly in a fitting manner on February 3rd and March 13th 1929 respectively. Swami Prabhavananda's masterly discourses on those occasions were much appreciated by the audience. The Portland public is becoming aware of the splendid work that Swami Prabhavananda is doing. We feel that it is impossible to put into words an estimate of the deep and untiring efforts of the Swami to bring to the Western world the ideals of the Vedanta. To those who are in personal touch with him in his work this is a constant inspiration.

R. K. MISSION PREACHING WORK

Swami Vasudevananda and Swami Ghanananda of the Ramakrishna Mission started from the Headquarters at Belur on the 19th last on a propaganda tour through Midnapur District and delivered lectures in several places. Swami Vasudevananda spoke in Bengali at Kharagpur, Midnapur, Contai, Gaonkhali, Mahishadal, Kalyanchauk, Tamluk, Raghunathbadi and other places, on Sri Ramakrishna and the Harmony of Religion, Karma Yoga and Indian National Problems, Religion and Politics, Sanatana Dharma, Religious Basis of National Service, Sri Ramakrishna, Duties of Students, etc. Swami Ghanananda delivered his lectures in English at those places on the Significance of Sri Ramakrishna's Life, Evolution and Perfection, Duties of Indian Students, Soul of Indian Nationalism, The Dharma of the Indian Villager, Sri Ramakrishna and Indian Nationalism, Rural Re-construction, Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of India's Soul. In some places the lectures were translated sentence by sentence into Bengali by Swami Punnyananda of the Ramakrishna Sovasram at Contai who accompanied the Swamies throughout from Kharagpur and spoke also in most of the places visited. All the lectures were well appreciated. Swami Vasudevananda was presented with addresses at Midnapur and Gaonkhali in appreciation of his services in the cause of religion and philanthropic work. In some of the places there were public

celebrations of the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna and the presence of the Swamies was taken advantage of on these occasions. At Gorkai a Charitable Dispensary and a primary school were opened for the benefit of the villagers.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SARISHA, DIAMOND HARBOUR

The Secretary, R. K. Mission Ashrama, Sarisha, Diamond Harbour has sent us a Report of the works done by it during the years 1927 and 1928. Started under the most discouraging circumstances some seven years back, the Ashrama has, after a good deal of struggle, developed into a dynamic centre of constructive work in the village. The Report shows a very good record of useful service rendered to the neighbouring villages. The Ashrama has undertaken the stupendous task of village organisation, and we are indeed glad to note that its honest efforts have met with phenomenal success within such a short period of its existence. From the very start it has been the primary concern of this Ashrama to educate the masses on national lines, and much of its strength has been harnessed to that end. The Ashrama ran the following institution during the years under review :—

(i) An Upper Primary School for Boys (the R.K. Mission Siksha Mandir) : the number of boys on the rolls at the end of 1927 was 103, and it swelled to 194 towards the close of the year 1928. Besides free tiffin, books, writing materials, etc., the boys were supplied with mill-made cloths and blankets as well from time to time. The weaving classes were incorporated in the primary school in 1924 and three fly-shuttle looms worked during the period. The Siksha Mandir had nine teachers of whom five were paid, and the rest were monastic members. To stimulate the enthusiasm of the boys prizes also were distributed in the year 1928 amongst the meritorious boys. (ii) One Night School for those boys and grown-up people who are unable to attend the day school. Classes were taken up mainly by the members of the Ashrama and there were 22 students on the roll at the end of the year 1928. (iii) An Upper Primary School for Girls (The Ramakrishna Mission, Sarada Mandir) : the school was started through the generous support of Her Highness the Dowager Maharani of Mayur bhaj in a rented house at Sarisha. It counted 78 girls on the roll and four qualified male teachers on the staff. Out of a total number of 78 girls, 41 had to pay full fee which was annas four per head a month; and of the rest, 35 enjoyed free studentship and two were half free. Inspector of Schools recommended a monthly government grant of Rs. 40 which was sanctioned on the 23rd July 1928. One of the girls sent up for the Lower Primary Scholarship Examination secured a scholarship of Rs. 2 per month for two years. (iv) Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Mandir, Mankhand (an U. P. School for girls) : this school is situated in the village named above about 3 miles and a half from the Ashrama. It had 44 girls on the roll and a qualified senior trained teacher on the staff.

Besides these educational institutions of various degrees of usefulness, the Ashrama ran one Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary during the years under review. The total number of cases treated was 1836 in 1927 and 1714 in 1928 of which 2497 were new and the rest repeated cases. The Ashrama had to its credit a well disciplined and well organised troupe of Boys Scouts and a pack of Wolf-Cubs.

whose services were availed of in times of fire-relief and Mela-relief works during this period. Besides, the Ashrama library and the free reading room containing 725 volumes and some high class monthlies, weeklies and dailies afforded ample opportunities for study to the students and teachers of the local High School as well as to the village people. The Ashrama maintained 17 indigent families consisting of 40 members with food supply, provided pecuniary help for some college students, and distributed 155 pieces of cloths and 861 pieces of blankets amongst the needy people of different villages. It undertook Mela-relief at Joyrampur, organised a cholera-relief at Nabashan and rendered house to house relief in the villages during the years under consideration.

In short no pains were spared by the workers of the Ashrama to render themselves serviceable to the suffering humanity. The stupendous nature of the works undertaken by the self-less workers of the Ashrama would be quite evident from this brief review placed before the public. The Ashrama stands in need of substantial financial support from the generous public to continue and develop the works. The present needs are outlined below :—

- i. The erection of a shed for weaving and other technical classes of the Siksha Mandir for boys. The cost has been estimated at Rs. 6,500 including the expenses of levelling the land.
- ii. The sum of Rs. 7,000 for the erection of the building for the girls' school at Sarisha.
- iii. A minimum amount of Rs. 1,000 for the purchase of a magic lantern and slides for the night school as well as for the propaganda work in the neighbouring villages.
- iv. An additional monthly subscription of Rs. 150 to meet the monthly deficit.
- v. An amount of Rs. 80 towards the pay of three teachers to be appointed.

The Ashrama has been a permanent source of light and inspiration to the surrounding villages, and the importance of this philanthropic institution in such a locality where education and medical aid are sorely needed can hardly be over-estimated. We sincerely hope that in view of the manifold works the Ashrama has undertaken, and the benefit it has been able to confer upon the suffering and the needy through the services of its self-less workers the kind-hearted public would come forward with adequate financial help to enable the institution to carry on this humanitarian work. The Secretary, in conclusion, conveys his heart-felt thanks to all donors, subscribers and friends for their sympathy, assistance and co-operation without which it would have been impossible to build up the present work.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA VEDA VIDYALAYA, BHAWANIPUR, CALCUTTA

The Gadadhar Ashrama, Calcutta, is conducting a Vedic Vidyalaya for the promotion of Sanskrit learning, especially of the study of the Vedas and other scriptures of the Hindus. The Ashrama has not only served as the nucleus for the growth of the Vidyalaya, but has also been accommodating it from its very inception in July 1922. The strength of the institution soon rose from nine to seventeen

during 1924-25, and ever since the work of the institution has steadily and largely increased. The number of students receiving instruction at present is forty. The staff consists of two Swamies of the Ramakrishna Mission, and two stipendiary Pundits. All branches of Sanskrit learning including the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures, Grammar, Kavyas and various branches of Indian philosophy like the Vedanta, Yoga, Vaishesika, and Nyaya are taught in the Vidyalaya. A library named The Vivekananda Vani Bhavan, containing a choice collection of over 1000 books on Indian philosophy and religion, is attached to the Ashrama. The total expenses of the Institution during the fourteen months from the beginning of November 1927 to the end of December 1928 came up to Rs. 3,224-4-0 as against Rs. 639-2-0 incurred during the previous ten months. Its principal sources of income are a recurring grant of Rs. 60 per month from the Government with a special library grant of Rs. 60 and a contribution of Rs. 360 from the Corporation of Calcutta. From the very start it has also been receiving donations and subscriptions from the public; but as an educational institution imparting free tuition and, in deserving cases, free board and lodging it ought to meet with still more ready response from the generous public. It is hoped that in these days, when Indians are becoming conscious of the glories of their ancient culture, an institution of this type will never suffer for want of patronage and encouragement.

THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, SHEILA, KHASI HILLS

The Khasis form an important section of the hill population of Assam. Although they are the descendants of an ancient and heroic race of Puranic times, their financial and educational conditions today are extremely deplorable. Taking advantage of this, Christian Missionaries are not slow in carrying on vigorous propaganda for their conversion. And already as many as 40 thousand (i.e., the one-sixth of the whole population) of the Khasis have gone into the Christian fold, adopting and professing everything Western as good. To combat the wholesale denationalisation of these people the workers of the Ramakrishna Mission have been carrying on educational, charitable, and missionary work among them for the past five years. The mission is conducting at present 8 schools and two small boarding houses financed mostly by local friends. The Ashrama also conducts a Dispensary which administers Homeopathic and Biochemic medicines, and the number of cases treated during the years under review is 2158. The monks of the Ashrama hold classes at different places, on the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, Gita, and other scriptures in Khasi. The birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda as well as other important Hindu festivals are celebrated. Extensive tours over the District are undertaken by the workers. Over 20 magic lantern lectures were given on religious, educational and health subjects. A library containing over 200 books is also attached to the Ashrama. Though the Ashrama contemplates further extension, it is handicapped for want of funds. Its immediate needs are:—

(a) More self-sacrificing and young workers.

(b) A permanent fund to help any centre whenever necessary, to raise the status of existing schools to that of H. B. Schools which will require at least Rs. 1,000 per institution, to start 5 more M. E. schools of which the average expense per school will be Rs. 500 a

year, and to finance the publication of religious books in Khasi. Any contribution, however small, will be thankfully acknowledged by Brahmachari Mahachaitanya Ramakrishna, Ashrama, Shella, P.O. Lait Kynsew, (Khasi Hills).

RAMAKRISHNA ASIIRAMA, FARIDPUR

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Faridpur, Bengal, originally started under the name of Sri Ramakrishna Samity in 1921, has been doing much useful social service in that locality. A free primary school and a Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary are attached to the Ashrama for the benefit of the cultivators and poor people of the place. The Ashrama also undertakes relief of distressed families, the nursing of helpless persons and cremation of dead bodies. It also organised a relief party for collecting money in aid of the famine-stricken people of Bankura, Balurghat, and Khulna, and the collections which amounted to Rs. 412-4-6 were sent to the various relief parties operating in the distressed areas. The Ashrama is also conducting a Students' Home accommodating five students at present. The Ashrama authorities desire to raise the strength to 25 and to provide facilities for their secular and spiritual education, as well as for their training in agriculture and some other useful home-industries. The land and buildings required for these purposes will cost nearly Rs. 30,000 for which the Ashrama appeals to the generosity of the public. Contributions may be sent to Brahmachari Bibhuchaitanya, Secretary, Ramakrishna Ashrama Faridpur, Bengal.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA VIVEKANANDA SEVASHRAMA, MUZAFFARPUR, BRANCH OF THE R. K. VEDANTA SOCIETY, CALCUTTA

The Sevashrama has been for the past two years trying to meet the medical and educational needs of the place. A free Dispensary giving both Homeopathic and Allopathic Medicines as well as a free day school and a free night school are attached to the Ashrama. The total expenditure on the Dispensary amounted to Rs. 329-10-9 and on the schools to Rs. 286-9-3. It is proposed to start vocational training classes in the schools. The pressing need of the Ashrama at present is the construction of buildings for the workers' quarters, for the free schools, for the Dispensary, and for the temple. The Ashrama appeals to the public for funds. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary of that Ashrama.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman’ ”.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER

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कृष्ण कृष्ण महायोगिस्त्वमाद्यः पुरुषः परः ।

व्यक्ताव्यक्तमिदं विश्वं रूपं ते ब्राह्मणा विदुः ॥

त्वमेकः सर्वभूतानां देहास्वात्मैन्द्रियेश्वरः ।

त्वमेव कालो भगवान्निष्पुरुषव्यर्थेश्वरः ॥

वाणी गुणानुकथने श्रवणौ कथायां

हस्तौ च कर्मसु मनस्तत्र पादयोर्नः ।

स्मृत्यां शिरस्तवनिवासजगत्प्रणामे

दृष्टिः सतां दर्शनेस्तुभवत्तनूनाम् ॥

नमः परमकल्याण नमः परममंगल ।

वासुदेवाय शान्ताय यदूनां पतये नमः ॥

O Krishna, Yogin Supreme, 'Thou art the Great Original Being. The universe, manifest and unmanifest, is known to the wise as 'Thy body.

Thou art the sole Master of the body, breaths, the mind and the senses of all beings. Thou art Time, the Possessor of all majesties, the Lord omnipotent and subject to no change.

Let our speech be devoted to the narration of Thy greatness, our ears to the hearing of Thy stories, our hands to the performance of Thy works, our minds to the meditation of thy feet, our heads to bowing to the world as thy abode, and our eyes to seeing the righteous who are Thy body.

Salutations unto Thee, O Vasudeva, the Lord of the gods, who art the abode of everything auspicious and good.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

About 8 p.m. in the evening, Monday the 20th August, 1883, when M. and his friend Hari Babu entered the room of the Master, they found him meditating within the mosquito-net, sitting on his smaller cot. As they sat on the floor, the Master came out of the net which was then rolled up, and was saluted by the devotees.

The Master said [to Mani], "I was meditating within the mosquito-net; and I thought that meditation was nothing but imagining a form and I did not like it. How fine it would be if He reveals the object of meditation in a flash! I said to myself, 'when is the difference between the meditator and the object of meditation?'"

Mani: Yes, sir. You said that He Himself has become the beings and the world and everything. He who meditates is also He.

Sri Ramakrishna: Again, if He does not make us meditate, can we meditate? Meditation also depends on His will. What do you say?

Mani: Such is your case no doubt, because you have no ego within you. Whoever has destroyed his ego has reached this state.

Sri Ramakrishna: But it is good to have the consciousness of being the servant of the Lord. While I am feeling that I am doing everything, it is excellent to consider myself as a servant of God.

[Signs of the knowledge of Brahman]

Mani used to contemplate the nature of Parabrahman. The Master said to him,

"Brahman is like the sky, He does not undergo any modification, even as fire has no intrinsic colour of its own. By His own Shakti, He has assumed variegated forms. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are really the three Gunas of Shakti. If you cast a particular substance into the fire, the fire will burn white; with another it will be red, with yet another, it will be black. Brahman is beyond all the three Gunas and none can ever describe His nature. He is beyond speech. Whatever persists after everything else has been negated away and causes infinite bliss, is Brahman.

"A bridegroom has come to his father-in-law's place and has been sitting in the parlour along with many other young men of his age. The bride and her friends have been seeing them from the next room through a window. Her friends do not know her husband; so they pointing to a young man ask her, "Is that your husband?" The girl smiles and says, "No." Then they point to another and ask her if that is her husband; again she says, "No." Again they point to a third one and receive the same negative answer, till they point to the bridegroom himself and ask her. This time she says neither yes nor no, but only smiles and remains silent. Then her friends knew that this indeed was her husband.

"Wherever there is true knowledge of Brahman, there is silence."

[Holy company: the duty of the householder]

Sri Ramakrishna (to Mani): Why do I talk so much?

Mani: That is for awakening the spiritual consciousness of the devotees, just as, to quote your words, the boiled ghee will make a bubbling sound when the raw bread is thrown into it to be fried.

The Master referred to Hajra in course of conversation.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Mani): Do you know what is the nature of a good man? He never pains or worries any one. There are some who are so constituted that when on invitation they will demand to be seated separately at the dinner. If one is truly devoted to God, one never takes a false step,—one never causes trouble to others.

"One should never mix in bad company. One should always keep aloof from the evil ones,—one has to carefully save oneself. [to Mani] What is your opinion?"

Mani: Yes, sir, bad company drags down the mind from spiritual levels. But as you said, it is different with the strong and the heroic.

Sri Ramakrishna: How is that?

Mani: When the fire is low, if we put in fresh fuel, the fire goes out. But a blazing fire is not affected even by a fully grown plaitin tree; it burns it to ashes.

The Master enquired about Mani's friend, Hari Babu. Hari Babu had lost his wife some eleven years before and he had not married again. He had his parents, and brothers and sisters of whom he was very fond and took good care. He was about 29 years old. Mani said to the Master, "He has come to see you. He lost his wife long ago."

Sri Ramakrishna : What do you do ?

Mani : He does not do anything particular. But he takes good care of his people.

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling) : How is that ? You have become a 'pumpkin-cutting brother-in-law.' You are neither a worldly man nor a devotee of the Lord. This is not good. In certain families, there are some men who are always busy with the boys and girls of the families and smoke their hubble-bubble in the outer apartments;—they have no other work. But sometimes they go inside the house and cut pumpkins. Women, you know, do not cut a whole pumpkin;* so they send word to them through the young boys to come and cut the pumpkins. That is the only use the families make of these men. Therefore they are called 'pumpkin-cutting brother-in-law'.

"Do this, but do also that. Look after your worldly affairs, but keep your mind in the lotus-feet of the Lord. And whenever you are free and alone, read such books on devotion as *Srimad Bhagavatam* or *Chaitanyacharitamrita*, etc."

By that time it was about ten at night. The Kali temple was not yet closed. So Mani went and bowed at the Vishnu and Kali temples. It was a moon-lit night and the whole temple looked beautiful in the silvery light.

When he returned to the Master's room he found him sitting to a light supper. A little while after he and his friend bowed at the Master's feet and left for Calcutta.

* In Bengal the custom prevails that women should not cut whole pumpkins,—these should be first cut into two by a male; then only women can prepare them for the kitchen.

THE BASIS OF CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

Cultural contact is one of the most powerful factors to bring the distant parts of the globe into closer touch with one another. The humanising forces of race-culture instinct with a potential urge for expansion transcend all the barriers which a national tradition imposes upon human imagination; they open out wider visions of life and thought, and thereby facilitate a rapid synthesis of world-experiences as well as a harmony of aspirations. This kind of cultural relation is not a new phenomenon in the annals of the present day, but is as old as the history of the human race. The civilisations of the ancient people coming in contact with one another produced even in the dim past an atmosphere of kinship and cultural understanding. The role India has ever played towards the consummation of such an end stands in bold contrast with the spirit of exclusiveness that characterises the modern life of the Western people. The deathless soul of India quickened the decaying pulse of Europe many a time before, however much the modern West may ignore this fact in the heat of her political greatness. "In the prosperity of Persia and Egypt she laid the foundations of the Grecian and Roman civilisations; through political Greece, she gave Europe Christianity, and through the world-conquering Arab she was the mother of Renaissance, of Reformation and of the scientific and humanistic movements that followed it." The splendid achievements of the servants of the Greater India Society coupled with many an archaeological discovery of the present day have brought to light how in the distant past the tidal wave of Indian culture transcending all geographical limitations swept through different channels of human thought in far-off lands and made a cultural conquest of the greater portion of humanity before any other race could even step out into the glare of a civilised life. In fact such an interchange of experiences and ideas has been a silent and gradual process, and history shows that however strong and well-defined the territorial boundaries may be, the accumulated wisdom of the different races cannot be kept confined for long within their narrow surroundings. Either through political aggression or commercial expansion, these barriers are broken down and opportunities are opened for a fusion of cultures. The establishment of European domination in the East has created a new ferment in the thought-world of humanity; it has brought into bold relief the distinctive features of the two types of civilisations of the East and the West. It has furthermore ushered into prominence the most pressing problem whether the aggressive Western culture would engulf altogether the passive

civilisation of the East or a happy cultural synthesis is at all possible of accomplishment through mutual understanding and a process of assimilation.

Humanity demands that a pointed and straightforward answer must be given to this question and a common meeting ground should be found out where the East and the West can unite and evolve a fuller civilisation in the interest of human well-being. It has been rightly pointed out by the Hon. Bertrand Russel that one conclusion is irresistible that any future civilisation must be a world-civilisation, not the civilisation of a nation or even a continent. Asiatic ideals cannot be preserved in Asia except to the extent to which they can be spread over mankind. The days when isolation was possible are past; Asia must teach the West or unlearn her distinctive virtues. For, the whole world is interdependent and a constant stream of thought has through ages enriched the common heritage of mankind. It is the realisation of the mutual dependence that has kept the mighty human fabric bound together and ensured the continuity and permanence of civilisation. It must also be remembered that the evolution of the different types of civilisation differs not because of any fundamental difference in human nature but on account of differences in circumstances and environments. The Western civilisation owing to its peculiar environments bears the stamp of aggressive manliness. It is characterised by 'a spirit of group action, scientific and business organisations, efficiency, power and material comfort and gratification;' and the reason is not far to seek. The Western people had to contend with the mighty forces of the sea and the light of their civilisation was practically lit up there. The history of the whole host of the European powers—Greece, Rome, Italy, Spain, France, Scandinavia and the British Isles—points invariably to the one conclusion that the Western civilisation is but a continuous development of the struggling process with the sea. The heroic struggle for existence as well as the insatiable craze for the expansion of their sphere of material influence drew out the virile energies of the people which expressed themselves in group-activity. In fact the Western civilisation was bred under the stimulus of an insistent urge for expansion and conquest. Efficiency has been its keynote and industrialism is but a natural sequence of the commercial instincts of the Western people whose bubbling energies have found their material fulfilment in the activities on the sea. But the case is quite different with the Asiatic people. The Eastern civilisation is an inland one; for the people placed in the midst of favourable environments had very little to contend with adverse forces and consequently developed a reposeful civilisation along the banks of the mighty rivers that water the fertile soils of.

their respective lands. Egypt built up her greatness on the Nile, Assyria and Babylon on the Euphrates and the Tigris, China on the Hwang Ho and so did India evolve out her splendid civilisation on the banks of the Ganges. The genius of the Eastern races developed into an inwardness of vision instead of gravitating towards material greatness. Asiatic civilisation is in fact characterised by love for peace and toleration, mysticism and meditation, spiritual comfort as well as salvation. Conservatism which is one of its distinctive traits has often been denounced as antagonistic to human progress, but a deeper analysis reveals that this stability or conservatism has kept it as firm as the pyramids of Egypt or the peaks of the Himalayas while the civilisations of Greece and Rome, Egypt and Babylon have been swept away from the face of the earth through the ravages of Time.

Aggressive militarism and efficient industrialism are conspicuous by their absence in the entire scheme of Eastern life, though in the eyes of the Western people these are considered as effective instruments of human progress. This attitude of supreme indifference to material concerns is primarily due to the deep-seated spiritual instincts of the East, that did never compromise themselves with the pragmatism of the West and lend countenance to the morbid principle that money and power should govern all human aspirations. Herein lies the fundamental difference between the two types of civilisation in their spirit and outlook. It is the abstract idea behind the concrete fact of life that really counts in the progressive realisation of the Eastern cultural ideal. One is thus intensely spiritual, and individual realisation has been reckoned as the summum bonum of human aspiration; whereas the other by nature of its development and expression amidst peculiar environments is ultra-materialistic. The absence of struggle has led one more or less to a state of repose while the extraneous circumstances have filled the other into intense activity. Rightly Prince A. Lobanov Rostovsky has remarked: "The European civilisation is extensive and quantitative, whereas the Asiatic is intensive and qualitative. The culture of Europe addresses itself to the masses, and in doing so has to level itself down to the general comprehension at the expense of certain higher qualities. In Asia the masses are not taken into consideration; life is left to follow its natural course, and just as any other force of nature, its growth remains wild." But in spite of these characteristic differences in the two types of culture, the idea of exclusive growth and evolution of one at the expense of the other at this stage of world's progress is indeed preposterous. "East and West are but two points on the horizon and as we extend our vision these two apparently opposite

points come closer and closer until they blend in unity," so says a modern thinker.

The facilities of international contact were never so great as now. The distances of time and space have been annihilated through the marvellous feats of science, and *already there are unfailing indications of a synthetic understanding of human purposes and destiny.* Human energies like the centrifugal and centripetal forces have their obb and flow in the affairs of men, and this variation in the tide becomes visible as we study the history of nations. The world is now no longer local; the whole human mind has been consciously open to truth. For, physically science has made the world one, and psychologically, the whole world has become expectant, and there have arisen new breeds of culture in which the stereotyped character of the separate culture is altogether lost. Everything is now in a melting pot. India has much to learn and much to teach. She might sit at the feet of the West and learn practical sciences. But she has also her priceless treasures to give to the West in exchange for the secular knowledge. India has ever been the world's international intellectual Exchange, and to-day in this age of world's greatest readjustment the East and the West have again met together on the soil of India for the evolution of international solidarity. The conception of the individual has undergone a material alteration, and the generalisations and intentions of the East and the detailed knowledge of the West have now met to show man as other than the body—as the veritable embodiment of a world-soul. Even in the conception of States both have shaken off their instinctive belief in kingheads and have pitched upon democratic ideas that have come to stay in the world. For, democratic system takes cognisance of larger compass of wills, recognises the individual as real and opens avenues through which the burden of his experience may be effective at the centre of power. Besides, the West is daily growing sick of her material culture, and many sincere souls are now out to feel the heart-beat of humanity. In the West there has of late been a great orientation of the philosophy of life, and many are laying the greatest stress upon the value of thought,—the foremost among them being the idealists of France and America. On the other hand, most of the lands of the East have already begun to run the process of industrialisation and understood the intrinsic merit of the West's technical efficiency. But, as Lord Russel puts it, 'something of what the West has to teach in the way of technical efficiency will have to be assimilated, since otherwise East will continue to be exploited and oppressed by the West. When man's main purposes are bad, efficiency is harmful. It would be far better to pursue the common good with some slackening

of efficiency than to pursue mutual destruction with the energy and ruthlessness which the West admires.' He further points out that *Asia must come to the rescue of the world, by causing Western inventiveness to subserve human ends* instead of the base cravings of oppression and cruelty to which it has been prostituted by the dominant nations of the present day.

But this superficial 'give and take' is not the sure cohesive force that would suffice to bring about a co-ordination between the two unless the angle of vision is changed and the underlying principle of oneness of humanity is visualised and made to govern the aspirations and activities of men. There must be a free exchange of heart, and each must look upon the other with love and respect and not with a senso of supercilious contempt that has created so much discordance in the harmony of our cosmic life. Viewed through the telescope of history it becomes distinctly evident that the crude method of unifying nations through diplomatic manouvres is sure to prove nugatory. The once-glorious part played by Alexander and Caesar, Attila and Charlemagne, Tamerlane and Napoleon now sinks into insignificance when the permanent values of their military exploits are judged in the light of other unifying forces that have contributed to the solidarity of men in the realm of human ideals and aspirations. Other nations except India have up till now given historic importance to the warrior and king; but India to the person who is the maker of warrior's thought. The making of human life into new historic moulds has ever been the proud function of Rama and Krishna, Zoroastrar and Buddha, Confucius and Lao-Tse, Christ and Mahomet; for, their width of vision, catholicity of heart and, above all, their spirituality have been the priceless legacy to the humanity of all ages and climes. Thought is the spring of action, and when that thought is sublimated into a spiritual potency, it transcends all limitations and governs the thought-world of mankind. That is why the teachings of the saints and prophets of all climes count more in the betterment of human lot than any number of political platitudes in the name of peace and good-will. For the silent thinker is the mover of nations' will. A Luther and a Voltaire, a Rousseau and a Thomas Paine are more valuable assets in the history of human progress than the hosts of military prodigies the world has ever produced. Europe must learn to view the outlook of life through this new perspective: for 'what appears to be permanent for the future welfare of humanity is the re-establishment of the balance between the two continents broken a couple of centuries ago. However, as the water-tight compartments which had enabled the various civilisations to grow side by side have been definitely swept away, the only basis on which this balance can

be achieved is the more complete fusion of the civilisations concerned.It is to be hoped that this evolution will not make out of Asiatics only second-rate Europeans but that the magnificent creative genius of Asia will adapt itself to novel conditions, and on the basis of European cross-fertilisation will produce a synthesis of new cultural values. *Europe must acknowledge whole-heartedly the spiritual riches of Asia, not as museum curiosities but as real living values to be absorbed into her own civilisation.'*

The East has once more rallied round her sacred idealism ; and there is also an attempt to absorb into her system whatever of the West has been found conducive to the healthy growth of her organic life. The East has ever recognised that a Bernard Shaw or a Motherlink, Bergson or an Undset, Romain Rolland or a Rabindranath, has no local habitation ; for they are all pitched high above the artificial distinctions of race or nationality and commands the respectful homage of entire humanity. In art and music, painting and sculpture, literature and drama, men and women sing but to the one cosmic tune and visualise the same supreme beauty that is universal and human ; and it is the glory of the East, especially of India, that the movers of thought have in every age been deified and worshipped with the flowers of love and reverence. But may we ask what the West has done up till now to intensify this spirit of universal brotherhood ? In spite of these long years of mutual contact, the manifold achievements of the Oriental minds have not as yet been allowed to accommodate themselves in the scheme of the cultural reconstruction of the Western world. The reason is indeed quite palpable. Most of the Eastern nations have so long been under the political thumb of the West and thus suffered in their estimation ; and the accumulated wisdom of the East was looked down upon as 'the babblings of an infant humanity.' It is indeed a hopeful sign of the times that some thinkers have got over this superiority complex and are trying to watch the march of events from a higher platform of life. The gift of the East is the gift of spirituality—the only force that must change the entire relation of mankind. However marvellous and awe-inspiring the material achievements of the West may be, there is no gainsaying the fact that the whole fabric of her culture must crumble to pieces unless the Eastern culture is brought to bear on the whole trend of Western activity. "*The West needs a temple bell to rest and the East a bugle call to action*"—is indeed a pithy pronouncement of a Chinese professor that epitomises the whole psychology of the present cultural synthesis. Man does not live by bread alone ; he must needs tap some other sources for the satisfaction of the yearning of his soul. Men and women are not merely a bundle of matter, but spiritual

entities working up to the oneness of spiritual consciousness. Modern science has even compelled the dumb plants to record the experiences of their pains and sufferings and many a secret of the unknown realm has been brought within the ken of human comprehension. The artificial boundaries between man and man, nation and nation, the organic and the inorganic are fast vanishing away. Man must realise the profound significance of these far-reaching changes, and stand face to face with the reality of life to pick up the missing link amidst this endless variety of forms. And it is needless to point out that when this spiritual vision will be opened unto humanity, then and then alone would they begin to embrace one another in love and sympathy and lay the actual foundation for a happy synthesis of culture—a consummation devoutly wished for.

AKBAR AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD*

(FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE)

By Svami Nirlepananda

Point of View :—We do many things which we ought not to do. Life worth its name necessarily indicates and involves this. A Bhikshu ought to forget his past associations. Yet past memory like an un-failing consort, would faithfully and persistently follow us however much we may try to shrug it off. And the whole truth is that we are merely trying to make the Ideal—Real. As one living the present history of India also, we have to drag the stamps and influences of antiquity always with us.

We remember our sweet, old academical days. We have carried the impression with us all these years. In these anxious hours of communal rancour the various workers in the vineyard of Sri Ramakrishna, monastic as well as lay,—all are striving to translate into action the supreme Ideal of *Rapprochement* in every sphere of life. They must be only too glad to bow down before royalty (with all its limitations) which was bold enough to experiment with it.

Be it remembered that this is not a piece of purely objective, scientific research of an antiquarian. We have plainly called Akbar, our *Hero*. This is a bit of a *lover's history* with all its shortcomings, and shall we say some of its redeeming features too?

Introductory :—It is one of the eternal platitudes of history that a great man is rightly understood and appreciated when he is compared

* Read at the Saradananda Lyceum, Khatra, Dt. Bankura, Bengal.

with his contemporary notables. And this is best done when we take due consideration not only of the contemporaries of our hero's own land alone (which is right in its own way) but when with a still broader intellectual outlook we stretch our vision far and wide, without confining ourselves within the narrow geographical boundary of a particular country and view the history of the whole contemporary world as an indivisible unity. This will serve as an excellent training in historical imagination. Moreover it is the unmistakable perspective which will unfold before us all the merits and demerits of our hero, so that we are able to make a correct estimate of him heretofore of all narrownesses and provincialisms. The great Mughal—Akbar is seen rightly when set amidst the long line of sixteenth century world-statesmen. In the present paper our main stand undoubtedly is on Akbar,—Akbar, as viewed side by side with his contemporary politicians. We are in the realm of comparative politics and culture.

After these words are said, a problem naturally suggests itself in our mind which has to be solved first. Some one asks—well, how are you going to judge them all? You must have a common norm. Pray, what is that?

When tackling a subject like this we are always conscious of a great many limitations. We know that these varied statesmen do not belong to the same country. Every one of them has his or her peculiar problems and strange environment when compared with any other, and all thoughtful students of history must confess that there are always inherent differences and dissimilarities in each one of these cases, which must not be lost sight of. The comparative method has its own limitations. Occasionally certain features only are common factors. We must not forget also that comparisons are sometimes odious. Take for instance, Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain and Emperor Charles V—"the greatest monarch of the sixteenth century". Elizabeth had to do with more or less a unified island-entity, whereas Charles having scattered territories lying far and wide, had to meet greater difficulties as regards inter-communication between the different parts. If this is the case with two European contemporary statesmen, it is quite obvious that there would be far greater differences in the cases of Akbar, the Mughal-Indian and Elizabeth, the English Queen.

Yet, there is a way out of this difficulty and that must be stated and accepted before we can proceed further. In order that parallelism may at all be possible we must turn to the general aspects of the whole affair. Speaking broadly, every statesman, whether Asiatic or European, had to tackle certain problems whose practical counter-parts may be obtained more or less on all soils. All our estimates would therefore be based upon these common, nearly similar State-problems which

confronted each one of these. We must take account of the method and means adopted by these respective statesmen towards solving them and their relative amount of success, so far as is practicable for us to gauge. The various statesmen must be taken bereft of their minute, territorial and local colouring and viewed in their general, broad features. That is perhaps the way of seeing them best in order that any comparison may be instituted at all. All our previous doubts and difficulties would thereby mostly vanish and the rather complex problem which so long beset us will stand simplified. Akbar, so to speak, was confronted with a Question-paper wherein certain State-problems were set for satisfactory solution, which (if we have the eyes to detect) re-appeared, more or less, in similar garbs before his contemporary European competitors. Attention must be turned to these. Thereby we obtain the right standard to help us to see as to who is the winner in this test of statesmanship. It is always helpful for mutual understanding to discover a synthetic link amidst all apparent varieties and dissimilarities. From a student of Vedanta, not less than this is expected.

The sixteenth century, its galaxy of great rulers :—At the outset, the sixteenth century seems to be very wonderful in one respect. Perhaps it alone produced the largest number of great rulers,—and the galaxy appears in all its grandeur and brilliancy. Our eyes are dazzled and we are full of wonder at such strange coincidences of history. Shall we call this the dispensation of the Divine wielder of human destinies—glimpses or flashes of His hidden hands?

The history of the world is thus sometimes seen to be the same web of life with merely varied filaments. England had its Henry VIII and Elizabeth. France produced men like Francis I and his successors. The Empire got its wonderful Charles V (in his one aspect), Ferdinand I, Maximilian I and Rudolph. Spain—its Philip II, Russia, its Ivan, the Terrible. Scotland—its Queen Mary; and last but not the least, Turkey produced one of its greatest modern builders—Solyman, the Magnificent. India also bore her share in enriching the century with one of her greatest rulers,—Akbar, the Great. It must here be remembered that strictly speaking, all these names cannot be put in the rank of statesmen. Real statesmanship cannot be had in the market-place. It is ever a rare commodity. Some of these, just mentioned had really sterling merit and worth which we would like to see in *statesmen*. But along with them the remaining others whom destiny raised to such high and prominent positions, must also be studied. Their blunders must be pointed out, if any. Students of psychology would bear us out, when we say that the law of contrast shows a thing at its best.

Difficulties on accession :—The first thing that suggests itself with regard to these statesmen is their respective situations at the time of accession. Some of them had to go through enormous difficulties, oppositions and dangers before they were able to stand on secure footings. Attention must be given to these. They had literally to assert their prerogatives of rulerships. For a statesman is never judged well by his victories in isolated battles which have every possibility of being chance-products. But a study of the series of constant and chronic difficulties which he had to face, brings out very clearly his power of resistance and his tact. The touch-stone of dangers reveals our inner worth and brings out our real colour, our true mettle. Bad days are our best tests.

Now, when compared with his contemporaries, the difficulties which Akbar had to face on his accession, surpass all in volume and intensity. What was his position? Let us think over it. A boy of fourteen was left in charge of governing a continent-like country (not yet fully under control) such as, India! The Indian Empire was veritably like the bow of Ulysses which none but he could wield. Although unusually manly and tactful, his very youth made him unfit for such a stupendous task. Can a mere boy claim obedience and respect from aged, experienced and veteran generals? After the demise of Humayun they were all on the look-out to assert their own independence and acquire their own fortune. They wanted to carve out separate, free holdings entirely for themselves. His difficulty from chiefs like Khan Zaman, Adham Khan, Asaf Khan, the Uzbek leaders, the Mirzas and his brother Hakim was not something negligible. He was thus surrounded on all sides by a host of these recalcitrant, refractory, aged generals—who were supposed to be his avowed guides and well-wishers. In fact he was hard enmeshed in a deadly trap of tutelage. In actuality, to begin with, *they* wielded the supreme authority, *they* were his overlords and *he*,—merely a minor ward, a subordinate. Take the instance of Elizabeth or Charles V (Emperor). Can we obtain in their cases similarly exact situations? Akbar was specially more unfortunate in this respect than any of his contemporaries. The plots against Elizabeth were mostly formed many years after her accession and were, rightly speaking, later developments. For Akbar that was not all. The young prince was at that time, as we have said, the mere figure-head but more specially and immediately the real authority lay with Bairam Khan. Bairam began to act as an incubus to the young ruler when he (Akbar) aspired to free himself from the demon-like jaws—the deadly tentacles of his *so-called* guardian and breathe pure air once more. It required all the tact and good judgment of Akbar to purge off this stunting slavery.

His contemporary statesmen had no prototype of Bairam to contend against.

Then again, Akbar had no trained and faithful army behind him which could promise to stand by him in those dark days of adversity and bitter opposition. It is very well-known that among all alien dynasties in India that of Tamerlane was the "weakest and most insecure" in this respect. In the cases of all former Muslim rulers beginning from the Ghors and ending with the Lodies, the help of a large and well-trained standing-army was always at the back. Without that, how could the outlandish Muslims hope to make any stand in India? This danger was more aggravated in the case of Akbar. He knew full well that his dynasty was completely cut off from all connections with its extra-Indian home-land. But in addition to this Akbar had to give up all hopes of recruitment from Kabul, which produced the most warlike soldiers of these days, just because it was governed by an inimical brother. We seek elsewhere a parallel of this in vain. With what sort of soldiery had Akbar to be satisfied? It was made up of the worst stuff possible. A band of infantry devoid of all national or noble sentiments, always ready to sacrifice all higher ideals for their personal gain,—was Akbar's only solace. Henry VIII or Elizabeth had a feeble army to depend upon at the time of their accession. But it must be admitted by all that their cases were nothing like this at all. A foreign ruler among Indians like Akbar required the help of an adequate army much more stringently and keenly than any of his contemporaries. Perhaps this circumstance inculcated in young Akbar's mind that his rule in order to be really effective should be not by a soldiery but by love,—by winning men's heart. The message of Piyadasi Asoka's Stone Edict once more became a living force in the personality of Akbar. He realised full well that "the chiefest conquest was a conquest by *Dhamma*" (in his case by a Dharma,—tolerant, universal). We have to touch on this point again when we discuss his policy and his ideal as a ruler.

It must not be forgotten moreover that at the time of accession Akbar was master only of Delhi and its adjacent places. His very stand upon that insufficient and solitary ground meant in itself an enormous difficulty. What was the Capital City and a few more acres of land in comparison with the vast boundary of India? With such a circumscribed area of jurisdiction and with a number of elderly advisers and spurious well-wishers who constantly dinned into his young ears the advisability of leaving India for good and giving up the task of conquest as something superhuman,—what could he do? It must be said to his eternal credit that with his uncommon natural genius of royalty and his excellent education of early boyhood amidst

adversity, he refused to follow their advice and was bent on trying this bit of difficult task. Perhaps this born statesman with his extraordinary insight saw the vision of a consolidated India under his benign banner. He accordingly applied himself heart and soul into his task. It must not at the same time be forgotten that it took at least twenty years of strenuous fighting before Akbar could recover the lost territories and provinces of his predecessors. Herein lies his greatest difficulty. Such a sustained, lengthened effort also in its turn shows and establishes his abnormal mettle. This again has no counterpart in contemporary history. For this reason we may say without the least tinge of partiality or prejudice, that the difficulties of Akbar far surpass those of any of his contemporary statesmen. Naturally therefore the most honoured place among them ought to be his. Scrutinise the position on accession of Henry VIII and Elizabeth, Francis I and all his sixteenth century successors, Charles V, Ferdinand I, Maximilian II or Rudolph, Solyman or Ivan—none of these met the miserable plight which Akbar had to contend against. Many of these fought perhaps more than Akbar but that was not due to their inherent position but invariably to extend their territorial jurisdiction outside their own lands. The protracted quarrel and warfare between Francis I and Emperor Charles V was a typical example of this. The boy Akbar stood on grounds extremely slippery, sharp and dangerous. He was forcibly drawn into a vicious war-zone. There was no other choice for him, no other alternative. It was inevitable. His very existence was at a stake. All blatant, optimistic spirit was at the point of being crushed. He had to fight out every inch and establish his prerogative.

When we reflect upon all these difficulties of Akbar, we are tempted to hazard the statement that not only has he a respectable position among sixteenth century statesmen, but if a book were to be written on the world-statesmen of all lands and of all times, Akbar's claim of a place in it cannot be gainsaid.

Next let us turn to those difficulties in the internal administration, which more or less every statesman had to fight against on accession. Both Henry VIII and Elizabeth had the task of restoring order amidst chaos and general insecurity. Elizabeth showed her tact by fighting against all this ring of difficulties,—an impoverished people, a shattered navy and a general anarchy. She acquitted herself very creditably and naturally occupied a most respectful place among her contemporary State-competitors. Veritably hers was a Queen's place. Akbar also had to contend against these drawbacks. He inherited an almost empty exchequer and a country in anarchy, greatly perturbed after the Shur dynasty ruled. The Emperor Charles

had to suffer far less financially than either Elizabeth or Akbar. The rich Netherland trade-cities furnished him with sufficient money and these at first contributed rather liberally.

But when all these handicaps already alluded to, are scrutinized, we are convinced of the fact that Akbar's problem was rather a knotty one. The remark of Mr. Bowell seems after all to be very sane,—the policy of Akbar, says he, combines that of Servius Tullius in Rome with that of Philip Augustus or Philip IV in France.

Statesmen as soldiers:—Next we turn to these statesmen as warriors. Like most of his contemporaries Akbar also had to fight. He saw, as we have said, that, in order to live and rule at all, he must fight, and he faced the situation with beseeming courage. We cannot definitely say of his contemporaries that, to begin with, they had to fight because they *must*. By this we do not mean that all the wars waged by Akbar were defensive. In many cases he had to take the initiative beforehand for he knew that a clash of arms was inevitable. Moreover we must not forget that apart from justification or condemnation, ambition for extension also is an impelling force for kings. He appreciated the truth of the dictum that in certain cases the best and wisest defence is an opportune offence. Elizabeth also saw that for England's honour and good name, soldiers must be sent to France and Spain. So she acted accordingly. All the conquests of Akbar may not stand comparison with the brilliant external conquests of the Turkish Sultan Solyman in points of military skill and strategy. In fact, Akbar took no part in any extra-Indian campaign. Perhaps the area of such a vast land like India was more than sufficient. Yet amidst all the military glory gained by Akbar's arms, it must be added that the statesman in him always was more powerful than the bloody warrior. Like Ivan, the Terrible, of Russia, we cannot say of him that he had an inherent thirst for human blood. Akbar launched into battles generally when conciliation was of no avail. This is excellently illustrated in his wars with the Rajputs and his friendly alliance with Bijapore and Golconda. Even after a victorious battle he never proved to be cruel and inhuman to his fallen enemy. Of Akbar, as it has been said by a recent biographer of Lord Kitchener, it may be reported, that his difficulties with his enemies were not so much as beating them only, as,—beating them in such a fashion and by such means as to arouse as little bitterness as possible. He was not satisfied to secure a negative victory. He wanted to win over his former antagonists to his side for ever. Thus he liked to pave the way to a positive victory in the sense that the friendship and loyalty of the new allies could be relied upon. This he counted as real institutions of peace negotiations. It is amply illustrated by his dominant

policy of conciliation. He had that amount of saneness and sagacity which convinced him once for all that it is only the conquest of heart that lasts long and consequently is worth fighting for. In all the military activities of Charles V or Solyman or even of Elizabeth, we look for this in vain !

(To be concluded)

RELIGION AND ITS FUNCTION

By Prof. Suresh Chandra Sen Gupta, M.A.

Religion is a living reality and is as much a part of our existence as some of our physical necessities on which the vital breath depends. If food builds up the tissues of the body and keeps the flesh alive, religion keeps the higher life in man going and it is in this higher life that man really lives. Are we really living for our fellowmen around us, whether in family or society, when we are wholly taken up with our own sordid wants, busy taking the best food and putting on the smartest dress, utterly indifferent to the clamours of our hungry children or brethren ? We are dead so far as the latter are concerned, our life is no better than a dog's or cat's,—it is certainly not human. This is not living in the higher life and every one hates such an existence. Why ? Because the promptings of the true life within the throbbings of the Divine in man are there in him. No man if he rightly consults his inner experiences can be truly happy when he is indifferent to the higher demands of his nature. These demands are most pressing in the youngmen, when they have not yet been won over by the world. Why do they run to rescue a drowning boy or a house in flames ? In expectation of fame or reward ? No, certainly not. They do not know why they go, yet they go and do their duty. And this is religion, which thus consists in attending to the higher promptings or throbbings of a man's soul. Religion is not a mere magic web of so many subtle theories or dogmas, to which, only the blessed few—the God's elect—the Israelites of Jewish history or the Brahmins of our own, can be admitted. It is a common blessing 'as broad and general as the casing air.' It is not a privilege of a particular caste or tribe. Every man, if desirous of bringing out the best in him, must treat religion as much indispensable to his higher life as air to his physical. The Divine is within him. It is constantly knocking at the door of his heart which he has kept shut from without, being busy with the phenomenal appearances of his life. A man was to go beyond these to seek out the noumenon or the transcendental

reality which gives life and form to all that we see around. Without a keen perception and living realisation of this truth, our existence would reduce itself to a mere shadow, a mere "sound and fury signifying nothing." We may not all succeed in intellectually realising this lofty Vedantism but our hearts, if properly attuned, would vibrate or chime in unison with it and our lives would be suffused with its holy harmony. The ignorant rustic leaving his sickle in the field to offer a drink to the thirsty on the way-side, responds to this great truth,—he shows for the moment that his inward urge to help a distressed fellow-creature is a greater, higher reality than even his blooming corns. This is religion, as Swami Vivekananda understood it and wanted men to understand. He was a true Hindu and perhaps, as has been already pointed out by many, the greatest champion of Hinduism in the present age, for his life in its intellectual, spiritual and practical aspects was only the embodiment of the highest truths of the Vedanta, and what is Hinduism but the Vedanta? Its essence lies 'in the realisation of a conscious union with our true self which is one with God'. Our real self is the ultimate reality and if this supreme truth be applied to practical life, the social, economic and other troubles of the world around us must vanish away as the clouds before the sun. This is not more lofty idealism but the truth of it may be actually realised by men. Where is the room for hatred or jealousy or petty rivalries of all sorts that divide mankind into so many water-tight compartments,—when man can feel in the depths of his consciousness that behind the white and the brown, the king and the beggar, the rich and the poor, the same divine reality is pulsating and trying to evolve itself? The realisation of this truth brings with it a peace and a harmony which not even the Kollog Pact may dream of. The shrewd diplomats in the numerous Peace Conventions and Locarno treaties may promise loudly but may not have even a dim perception of the Supreme Truth of the Vedanta. It is this and this only which must be clearly understood by all true reformers in order that the reforms they talk about or seek to inaugurate in the different spheres of life may have any permanent value or meaning for man. Swami Vivekananda impressed this on the sceptic West and it is only a matter of recent history how his message was taken up by a wondering world.

But religion is not an abstract realisation only but also an active and dynamic force in our own life which pushes us on and on in our higher efforts. The ideal of Hindu religion has been rejuvenated in the modern age by the heroic monk Swami Vivekananda. The meditative, "ochre-clad" Yogi lost in his holy raptures did not dream away his life in a state of *dolce-far-niente* (sweet-doing-nothing) as

perhaps the sceptically-minded would caricature the stage of Samadhi. But he came down from his heights to draw us up, to help human progress, not by mere preachings but by realising and worshipping, in selfless service, the Narayana in the miserable and suffering. India's present and future progress will depend mainly on the active realisation of the truth as preached by the great Swami Vivekananda, and the great panacea, as he conceived it, for all our evils and sufferings is "a religion that would be scientific and a science that would be religious". However much the present tendency be to characterise the Vedantic gospel as vague and dreamy and though the efforts be keen in some quarters to set the young faces rigidly against the *Dhyan Murthi* (the meditative pose) in which the soul of India lies, we feel bound to say that no efforts or activities of man may be blessed or be of any good to him which leaves God out of calculation, relying only on human fore-sight or wisdom.

THE PROBLEM OF HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

By Swami Devatmananda

The history of a nation is a record of the kaleidoscopic changes in its socio-political life. And it becomes thrilling and stirring when the changes appear to be violent and far-reaching. India has in her history such records of the darkest periods when conqueror after conqueror overran and made havoc in the very heart of the once peaceful and quiet country from far-away foreign lands. The repetitions of such incidents brought about far-reaching consequences. India is already saturated with the forces of foreign culture and civilisation and consequently the country is passing at the present moment through a state of violent changes. For, what is a civilized human society but a dynamic and forward-moving force? And a society is called civilized only when it advances with strong and steady steps towards a higher idealism. This country in short is at present in the grip of a revolution for a higher evolution. But in the midst of the din and bustle of the multifarious activities of social, political and religious regeneration a distinctly discordant note is being continuously struck in the arena of our collective life. The problem of Hindu-Muslim Unity did never assume such a huge proportion as it has done to-day. The two warring communities are seriously at loggerheads in the name of the amelioration of their respective societies. The only silver lining of hope in the gathering gloom of communal tension is that some of the best brains and sincere

lovers of the country from both sides have already lent their best energy and attention to the matter and are straining every nerve for the final and happy solution of this much-tangled problem. For, it is an undeniable truth that it has retarded the progress of the land in every possible way. And naturally the hope of the country for a united stand will ever remain a visionary dream unless and until the problem in question is satisfactorily solved. But notwithstanding the fact that so much effort has been made in that direction the tremendous labour has failed to produce any appreciable result.

The two outstanding problems, 'the cow slaughter' and 'music before the mosque' during the prayer time are especially agitating the minds of the two communities at the present day. Leaving aside all the economic and political considerations associated with the prevention of cow slaughter, let us study the problem from the ordinary commonsense point of view. The Hindus aver that it is their religious duty to protect the cow because they look upon her with a religious sentiment. So they cannot tolerate cow-killing by the Muslims, though they shut their eyes to the organised form of cow slaughter by the Christians who have been systematically doing it for so many years ! And the reason for this differential attitude is quite obvious. The orthodox section of the Muslim community on the other hand asserts that as it is enjoined by the Holy Prophet and the Sacred Book, the Muslims are free to obey the commandment. So far so good : it is a religious injunction and they must follow it. But is it the only injunction in the whole Book ? What about the other great commandments given out by the Prophet ? Quite naturally then, the question arises, 'is it observed religiously or spitefully ?' That is to say 'is the cow slaughtered in a public place to spite the Hindus and to wound their religious feeling alone ?' Perhaps, it is this sort of non-Muslimlike behaviour that offends the Hindus the more. Similar is the case with 'music before mosque.' For, all on a sudden the Muslims waking up one fine morning discovered that they had not been behaving properly as a true follower of Is'aan by allowing music to be played near certain mosques. Frankly indeed, they set out to correct their mistakes and for good or for evil, the country now faces two of the most serious problems on earth.

The differences in religious faith and social customs and usages between the two communities must be attributed to the two distinct types of cultural ideas in which they have been nurtured and brought up from the very beginning. The Muslims imbibed ideas and mentalities of a different nature, behind which they had a set of religious faith and beliefs born of a characteristic climate and environment. In short, the Muslims are

not Hindus and the latter cannot expect them to have customs and manners similar to their own. Such being the case the Hindus cannot have any ground to grumble against the Muslims because of the above differences. Are not the Christians foreigners, and diametrically opposite to them in every respect? How have the latter been able to put up with all such differences? Have not the Hindus, again, so many differences among themselves? Have they not a good number of sects with various ideas and ideals, peculiar manners and customs amongst themselves? Yet, they are allowed to stand in the Hindu fold and nobody questions their right to do so. Thus, it is quite clear that much of the trouble arises out of the existence of a number of misconceptions among the members of the two communities as regards each other's faiths, beliefs and creeds, and the reason is that both the communities are not intimately known to each other. For, from the very beginning of the Hindu-Muslim contact the circumstances have been drifting in such a manner that very little chance was left for the two races to come into an intimate touch with each other. Moreover, the major portion of the difference thus created is generally due to a misunderstanding of each other's modes of life and culture. A section of the Mahammedans believe that if the life and conduct of Mohamet are brought to the very doors of the Hindu public and presented to them in vivid and living colours, much of the crudities of this conception will disappear and the path for a better understanding between the two can be paved. And finally, they hope that if they can discover a common point of contact upon a cultural and spiritual basis the bond of amity and goodwill will also be ensured.

With this end in view the 'Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishail Islam' of Lahore published and distributed freely several thousand copies of a brief sketch of the life of 'the Prophet of Islam' 'to all fair-minded non-Muslims on the occasion of the 14th centenary of the great benefactor of humanity'. A noble and broad-minded Muslim as he is, Maulavi Muhammad Ali the writer of the above pamphlet, deplores the lamentable state of affairs in the country and says at the very beginning of its preface: "It is with deep regret that one sees that though the Hindus and the Muslims have been living together in this country for about a 1000 years, yet little attempt has been made by the two communities to understand each other." And as a true follower of that immortal founder of the Islamic faith, he, in extending the cordial and generous hand of a brother to the Hindus, gives out the object of the free distribution of this pamphlet to 'the fair-minded non-Muslim'. He says: "This pamphlet though very small, is an attempt towards the great end of bringing about friendly relations between these two great communities, and it tries to remove the misconceptions which

prevail about the Prophet of Islam in Hindu mind." But how is it that the life of the Prophet being so noble and generous and his teachings so grand and pure, the Hindus living in the same soil have failed to have a correct estimate of his life and teachings? From the perusal of the booklet, one comes to the conclusion that either the religion taught by the Prophet is a quite different one from what is actually practised by the present-day Muslims or that the latter are the followers of the Prophet not in reality but in name only. The writer says that it was to bring about universal peace that the Holy Prophet Mohamet laid down in clear words that a prophet was raised in every nation and that a *true* Muslim must believe in all the prophets. "We sent apostles we have mentioned to thee, and apostles we have not mentioned to thee," says the Holy Book, and elsewhere it reiterates the same idea when it says, "There is not a people but a warner has gone among them." Thus, Mohamet has upheld the 'profession of faith in all the religious reformers raised among different nations', and the writer rightly observes, "It is in fact the only thing that can bring peace to the different warring factions of humanity that follow this or that prophet," and he sums up by saying, "A Muslim is bound to believe that a vast country like India and a huge nation like the Hindus could not be without a book or without its prophet." But how do the Muslims regard the Hindus and their religion? The Hindus are to them no better than Kafirs and their religion, idol-worship! But what was the object of the Prophet that led him to fight? It was 'not to compel the unbelievers to accept Islam which was against all the broad principles which he taught,' but, 'it was to establish religious freedom, to stop all religious persecution, to protect the houses of worship of all religions, mosques among them'. The Holy Koran says: "Fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion is only for God." Such being the case, may we ask what place do the Muslims assign to the Hindu gods, goddesses, prophets, saints and their religious books? The writer with a righteous indignation laments over the misconception amongst the Hindus 'that the Holy Prophet preached his faith with the sword'. He says, "The great and liberal mind that preached not only love and respect for the founders of the great religions of the world but much more than that—*faith in them* could not shrink down to the narrowness of intolerance for those very religions. It (Islam) preaches equal love for all, equal respect for all, equal faith in all"; for, explicitly the Holy Book says, "there is no compulsion in religion." And the religion that was preached by the Holy Prophet is so very catholic and broad that it gives full and unqualified scope and choice to the people at large, for religion is a personal

concern. The Koran says, "The truth is from your Lord, so let him who pleases believe and let him who pleases disbelieve." Nowhere the Holy Book asserts that the unbelievers (in Islam) being idolators must be persecuted and brought within the fold of the only religion, viz., Islam. On the other hand, there are clear and unequivocal proofs to the contrary. And yet the Muslims look upon the Hindas differently only because they profess a different faith and hence they are called idolators ! And these fanatical Muslims stand before the world as the true followers of the immortal Prophet ! Is it not a blasphemy ?

Again, what was the attitude of the Prophet towards an enemy ? Did he want 'a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye' ? He soared high above the common contamination of the ordinary life of the world. He was magnanimous *par excellence*. At the death of his deadliest enemy, Abdulla-bin-Ubay, the head of the hypocrites and who night and day plotted against the Muslims, he prayed to the Lord to forgive him. 'Twenty long years of persecution and warfare were absolutely forgiven and forgotten.' It is magnanimity indeed and 'is worthy of all admiration'. Instances can be multiplied to show that Mohamet was born a prophet of peace and goodwill. But what a deplorable contrast do we notice between his lofty teachings and the actions of his followers in India to-day ! As regards his even-mindedness in administering justice the writer says : "Muslim and non-Muslim, friend or foe, were all alike in his eyes.....Notwithstanding the deep-rooted malice of the Jews against Islam, when a case between a Jew and a Muslim once came up before him, he decreed in favour of the Jew, regardless of the fact that the Muslims, nay, even perhaps the whole of his tribe, might thereby be alienated." Was it a diplomatic move on the part of the Prophet to acquire name and prestige thereby ? No, he truly lived what he said. "Let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably ; act equitably ; that is nearer to piety," said the Prophet. And he was true to his words up to the last when on his death-bed he had it publicly declared, "If I owe anything to anybody it may be claimed ; if I have offended anybody he may have his revenge." Such being the Islamic Ideal, is it not a pity that at this critical juncture a section of the Mohammedan community in India have raised a veritable crusade against the Hindu thought and culture and have thereby tarnished the fair name of Islam and created an unhappy division between the two communities to the relief of the masters of the land ? Mohamet has assigned a very high place to acts of charity. He speaks of charity as 'indicating the performance of our duties to God and the performance of our duties to man and other creatures of God'. We are indeed surprised to find that the writer of the pamphlet, Maulavi Mahamad Ali, has in his zeal and

enthusiasm for his own religion painted the Prophet in rather too undignified colours. In the preface to 'the Quran' the Maulavi says that 'according to the Holy Quran all religions have Divine revelation' as the *common basis* and asserts that the revelation that has come through the Prophet has been 'the *last* of the great religions of the world'—rectifying the errors and inaccuracies that have crept into the others by the passage of time—that religions and religious laws have been harmonised and made perfect in Islam, and that no prophet is needed after the Holy Prophet Mohamet, who is therefore called the 'Seal of prophets'. "Thus," he sums up, "as a distinctive characteristic of its own, Islam claims to be the *final and the most perfect* expression of the will of God." Here the statement would have been correct if it would have been made with certain reservations. For, Arabia where Islam had its origin and the few other places round about it, were not the only spots on the face of the globe; besides the degenerated form of Christianity and the various other forms of idol-worship, there were many other religious faiths in lands other than Arabia and its surrounding countries, much older in origin and more catholic in their outlook than what prevailed there. Hence, the new faith, *i.e.*, Islam, cannot be called the 'perfected' of *all* the religious faiths of the world and cannot be accepted as 'final' too; for if Islam once admits the possibility of the rising of prophets previous to it, it must have to admit on the same ground of the Law of Nature the possibility of prophets who are yet to come, though it may not be in the same faith, but in other faiths certainly. Islam may be 'the final' and 'most perfect expression of the will of God' to the Muslims, but what guarantee is there that it should be accepted as such by people professing other religious faiths? But the Hindus view this aspect from quite a different angle of vision. Lord Sri Krishna explicitly and unequivocally says in the Gita :

यदा यदाहि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

"Whenever, O descendant of Bharata, there is decline of Dharma and rise of Adharma, then do, I incarnate myself forth." Is not this statement corroborated by facts of history and admitted by the Puranas that hold that the Lord did come down in embodied forms from time to time whenever such an incarnation was necessitated by the inexorable Law of Nature? The Koranic statements, 'We sent apostles we have mentioned to thee and apostles we have not mentioned to thee,' and 'there is not a people but a warner has gone among them' are but faint echoes of this declaration of the Gita. In fact, there cannot be any room for partiality on the part of the

Lord of the Universe towards any particular section of humanity of any particular spot under the sun.

The writer's ignorance of the teachings of other religions can be easily understood from his own statement in the book. He (the Prophet) taught, *what no teacher before him had ever taught*, not only that a prophet had appeared in every nation, but also that a Muslim must believe in all those prophets, just as he believed in the Prophet Mohamet. And he continues, "He (the Prophet) not only taught how one individual could live at peace with another, but also how different tribes and families of the human race could live in peace and harmony with each other, and to crown all, what *nobody in the world* had ever attempted, how peace could be brought about among the contending religions of the world." He further says, "He taught, and *never before him had the truth found expression through any prophet*, that there is not a nation on the face of the earth but has had a Divine messongor of its own." The writer is unquestionably a cultured and well-read man occupying a high position in society, and consequently when he goes to deal with a delicate subject, *viz.*, the sacred life, career and teachings of the Holy Prophet, he ought to have been very cautious in making surmises and statements which are clearly wide of the mark ; for, they affect in no small measure the feelings and sentiments of those towards whom he appears to be so very sympathetic and who concern him so much. A writer who pleads for such a noble and high mission of peace and goodwill is expected to know something about the history of the land and specially the one that concerns religious movement. He ought to have known the existence of the old religions of the Hindus, the Buddhists, etc., and a little of their creed and teachings. He ought to have known, again, that the Hindus have a set of Holy Books which are admitted to be the most ancient in the world and that they are authentic too, for they are regarded as revelations not indeed of an inspired personage, but of eternal principles, which do not stand for their veracity upon any particular personage. In fact the oldest known Aryan scripture, the Rig Veda, struck the note of harmony, of universal peace and brotherhood by declaring in a distinct and unequivocal expression the unity of Godhead: एकं सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति "The Existence is One, sages call it variously." Later, in the days of the Mahabharata in the ever memorable battlefield of Kurukshetra, which dates as early as 3102 B. C. (Cunningham) Lord Krishna reiterated the same old statement of the Hindu scriptures, *viz.*, the universality and catholicity of the Hindu conception of Godhead when he said :

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

"In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires : (it is) My path, O son of Pritha, (that) men tread, in all ways." Again, in the notable hymn to Lord Shiva, called Mahimna Stotra, the devotee sings by way of praising Him :

त्रयी सांख्यं योगः पशुपतिमतं वैष्णवमिति
प्रभिन्ने प्रस्थाने परमिदमदः पथ्यमिति च ।
रुचीनां वैचित्र्यादजुकूटिलनानापथ्यजुषां
वृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामराव इव ॥

"Of the several paths laid down in the three-fold Veda, Sankhya Yoga, Shaiva and Vaishnava scriptures, though some people take to one and some to another as the best, and though devotees follow these various paths, straight or crooked, according to the difference in their tendencies, yet, O Lord, Thou alone art the ultimate goal of all men as is the ocean of all rivers." Thus, it is clear that this wide outlook of religious life was admitted universally by all the Hindu Sacred Books, and at the same time, infinite scope was also given to the variation of thought and expression as regards the various aspects of the Supreme Being. This is not all : the Hindus did not stop by simply theorising and speculating upon such a high flight of conception but it was duly translated into practical everyday life. Every Hindu was taught to respect and revere others' views of Godhead and methods of worship. And to this day every Brahmin boy just to refresh and strengthen his memory as to the Supreme Unity of the various aspects of Godhead repeats every day :

आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।
सर्वदेव नमस्कारं केशवं प्रतिगच्छति ॥

"As the water falling from the sky goes to the sea, so the salutations to all the gods go to (the one Supreme Lord, Keshava." Thus, in very olden age, where history even fails to peep into its gloom the Hindu Sacred Books early tolled the knell of fanaticism and bigotry. And consequently history characterises the Hindus as 'mild and meek', because they never dipped their hands in their neighbours' blood even by way of political conquest, not to speak of religious coercion and conversion. The Hindus are primarily religious and their sole object in life is to demonstrate it practically by living the life. Thus, even after the Mahomedan conquest of India, though they were systematically and persistently provoked and coerced in matters of religion they did not retaliate. As regards Buddhism, it is needless to point out that it held before humanity a message of universal brotherhood and peace many centuries before the advent of Islam. And even to this day millions of votaries pay

their respectful homage to the Lord Buddha that preached the gospel of brotherhood from door to door, some 2500 years ago. Thus, instances can be multiplied to show that the assertions of the writer in question and persons of his ilk cannot stand the test of the grim facts of history.

Lastly, in reply to the primary objection of the Maulavi that many misconceptions prevail amongst the Hindus as regards the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet it can be asked, "what is responsible for that? How such a noble life has been misunderstood by the Hindus who are said to be so very catholic and broad in their views and who have been tolerating every form of religious faith since time immemorial?" Here the Muslim compatriot should be told definitely and clearly that the Hindus do regard Mohamet as a Divine Prophet of mankind and that they do honour and respect him as they do their own prophets and saints. This is not all, some go still further and accept him as another incarnation of the Lord, and so they offer him their heart's worship as such. For it is an admitted fact of history that in the hey-day of early Indian history when hordes of foreign tribes and peoples with their peculiar faiths came to India, they were accommodated in the Hindu fold without the shedding of a single drop of blood. Consequently, the root cause of the misconceptions, if any, regarding the Prophet must be sought elsewhere. The Muslims entered this country as conquerors and with fire and sword they carried everything before them till the nations of the soil were reduced to the position of conquered slaves. Their work did not stop in conquering the land only: the people had to sacrifice many things held precious in life, and over and above their religion also was at stake. With the Hindus, religion is the central pivot round which revolve all other phases of their socio-political life; for, to them the latter is quite subordinate to the life of religion. History tells us that excepting a few broad and noble-minded Mohammedan emperors the majority of the Muslim kings in India could not see eye to eye with the Hindu thought and culture and their attitude tended to foster a spirit of racial antagonism with the result that the attitude of the Hindus toward Islam has necessarily been one of apathy inspite of a close contact of several centuries between the two. Naturally enough Islam and its founder have been looked upon by the Hindus with terror and horror. And it would not be an exaggeration to state that very few sincere efforts have hitherto been made by the votaries of Islam to remove the misconceptions that attach to the good name of the Prophet and his noble teachings. What is needed is life wherein must be reflected the sublime idealism for which true Islam stands. For mere platform speeches, and pious wishes and even assembly legislation

will not be able to cement the ties between the two warring communities.

Last but not the least is the outstanding fact that the Hindus and Muslims will have to stand or fall together in their task of shaping the destiny of India. For, is not India after all, the motherland of both the Hindus and Muslims alike? In spite of all the existing differences it is the cradle of their infancy, the pleasure garden of their boyhood, the heaven of their youth and the final resting place in their old age. In every sense it is the home of both the communities and it will be so in time to come and the only requisite is that they must be made conscious of the same. It is time for all of us, the children of the soil, to sink all the petty differences in our common cause of national reconstruction. India is not yet dead as many suppose. Though much of her energy has been frittered away in petty quarrels, we still hope to see her once more seated, rejuvenated and glorified, as of old among the civilised nations of the world. She has yet to contribute her quota to the sum-total of human thought and culture. It is coming to be; for, "the decree has gone forth, the fiat of the Lord has gone forth—India must rise," as Swami Vivekananda, the great patriot saint of modern India once prophesied. The two apparently opposite forces must be welded into a harmonious whole for a permanent unity between the two. Rightly did Swami Vivekananda say, "For our motherland, a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islamic body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future of perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islamic body." For, according to him, "without the help of practical Islam, the theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind". He further declared, "We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Quran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Quran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the various expressions of the Religion which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best". Standing before the august assembly in the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, the Swami with the keen foresight of a seer prophesied more than three decades ago, "Upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of their resistance: 'Help and not Fight,' 'Assimilation and not Destruction,' 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.' This we think, is the only solution that can be offered to the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity that has faced India today.

INDIAN METAPHYSICS

(Continued from the June issue)

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

The Charvaka System

The materialists were known as the Lokayatikas or the Charvakas. The former word implies that the world which we see is the only reality, and the latter word signifies those who are pleasant-spoken. To them perception is the sole source of truth, while inference is unreliable and scripture is not true at all. They define reality as that which can be sensed. The ultimate cosmic principles are the four elements: earth, water, fire and air. Intelligence is the result of their combination. Thus, thought is a function of matter. Even the materialists cite scripture for their purpose (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, II, 4, 12). Religion is an illusion and God does not exist at all. Nature is the only existence and there are no gods anywhere. The rule of life is: Eat and drink and be merry today, for tomorrow we die. Thus, this philosophy—if it can be called so at all—is a philosophy of selfishness and sensuality. It substitutes license for discipline and self-indulgence for self-sacrifice. But it never flourished much or long in India and was very soon criticised and overthrown, despite the statement that it was embodied in the Brihaspathi Sutras. It is adumbrated in Jabali's advice to Sri Rama in Valmiki's Ramayana, but Sri Rama demolishes it and shows its hollowness and untruth. The consciousness is no more a property of the body than light is a property of the eye. We are conscious of the body and speak of it as our body. How can this be if both are one? If consciousness be a property of the body it could be sensed by others like other material things but it is not an object of sense-perception at all. The materialistic philosophy can never account for morality and religion which are the deepest and truest things in us.

"Who forged that other influence

That heat of inward evidence

By which he doubts against the sense?"

Jainism

Jainism on the other hand is a noble faith. It is traced by its followers to Rishabha Deva. He is referred to in the Bhagawatha as the founder of Jainism. The actual founder who gave its doctrines currency and power was Vardhamana who was born in 599 B.C. and

died in 527 B.C. The Jain scriptures refer to the seven *tattvas*, the nine *padarthas*, the six *dravyas* and the five *astikayas*. According to them the universe consists of two ever-existing, catagories, i.e., Jivas (souls) and *Ajiva* or non-soul consisting of the formless entities viz., dharma, adharma, space and time and the entity with form viz., pudgala (matter). Dr. Radhakrishnan says with brevity and truth: "Buddhism and Jainism deny the existence of an intelligent first cause, adore deified saints, possess clergy practising celibacy, and think it sinful to take the life of any animal for any cause." Buddha lived from 567 B.C. to 488 B.C. Thus the lives of these two great founders of religions overlap each other to a very large extent. Jainism is however an older faith in India than Buddhism.

Jainism does not affirm the eternal Creator and Ruler of the universe, though it admits dharma and adharma and it admits also a future life and heaven and hell. That is its greatest defect and weakness. It does not accept the authority of the Veda. Its great virtue is its emphasis on the doctrine of Ahimsa (non-injury). It affirms that every living being has a soul and that we should not injure life for any purposes including sacrifices. It emphasises the value of the ascetic life. According to it perfection is not nothingness but "a state of being without qualities and relations, and removed from all chances of rebirth".

In regard to creation it holds that Prakriti (Nature) is atomic in its constitution and is the cause of the world. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The 'central features of Jaina philosophy are its realistic classification of being, its theory of knowledge, with its famous doctrines of *Syadvada* and *Saptabhangi* or sevenfold mode of predication and its ascetic ethics." It is not possible to go into these intricacies of doctrine here. Their defect is that, while they emphasise the need for suspending judgment owing to the complexity of Truth, they do not strike straight for the Truth. The doctrine of *Syadvada*, or *Anekantavada* as it is called consists of the following affirmations, viz., a *स्यादस्ति* (may exist), *स्यान्नास्ति* (may not exist), *स्यादस्ति नास्ति* (may exist and may not exist), *स्यादवक्तव्य* (may be unaffirmable) *स्यादस्ति अवक्तव्य*: (affirmation of existence not possible), *स्यान्नास्ति अवक्तव्य*: (affirmation of non-existence not possible), and *स्यादस्तिनास्ति अवक्तव्य*: (affirmation of existence and non-existence not possible). The *Saptabhanginaya* refers to the sevenfold *standpoints* or angles of vision. They are *naigamanaya*, *shanaya*, *vyavaharanaya*, *rijusutranaya*, *sabdanaya*, *somabhirudhanaya* and *evambhutanaya*.

According to Jainism the soul is active in its nature. "The consciousness of the Jiva is ever active, and this activity reveals its

own nature as well as that of the object." Our passions lead to the inflow of matter (*pudgala*) which obscures the soul's knowledge. Karma is matter in a subtle form. When the soul is freed from matter, it becomes omniscient and its knowledge shines forth unobstructed. The liberated souls are alone the gods and are never born again. *Moksha* is eternal upwardness.

I have already referred to the non-affirmation of a Supreme Creative God in Jainism, though it says that souls attaining perfection are Paramatmas or supreme souls. Later on the Hindu gods came into Jainism, though they were placed before the *Tirthankaras*. It errs also in attributing the possibility of contradictory qualities to reality, though it has done a great service by emphasising the many-sidedness of reality. The *Syadvada* and the *Saptabhanginaya* do not lead to any final pragmatic realisation of values. The Jain philosophy rendered a great service by its doctrine of *anekantavada* or many-sidedness of reality, but it failed to reach the core of reality and to affirm the Absolute. It takes its stand on realism and pluralism but does not show how the universe of matter and the universe of souls are comprehended and transcended in a higher unity. The Noumenal reality or the Absolute is not the mere totality or summation of relative realities. Another defect is the view that the soul is not atomic or infinite but has got dimensions and is co-extensive with the body and is capable of expansion and contraction (*nadyamaparimana*). But this view would result in the soul being impermanent like the body. The Jain faith has lived on in power because of its great doctrine of *ahimsa*, and also its readiness to maximise its points of agreement with Hinduism, a quality not possessed by Buddhism.

Buddhism

Buddhism also, though a heretical dissentient from Hinduism became a powerful force because of its high and noble ethos. Its metaphysic was soon superseded in India by the reassorted Hindu metaphysic. Strangely enough the modern western philosophy is largely analogous to it. The pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer with its emphasis on the denial of the will to live, and the theory of creative evolution of Bergson were anticipated in it. In spite of all this, the weakness of Buddhism lay in what Dr. Radhakrishnan describes well when he says: "He (Buddha) denied the divinity of the gods and undermined the authority of the Vedas.....Ancient Buddhism resembles positivism in its attempt to shift the centre from the worship of God to the service of man." Yet with a strange inconsistency he says: "A persistent misreading of India's religious history is responsible for the prevalent view that Buddha's view

is an alien one opposed to the Vedas." "The denial" by Buddhism of God and the soul, its denial of room to religious emotion and devotion and its conception of *Nirvana* were the causes of its downfall in India, though in other portions of Asia which had not the gift of the higher revelation given to India it attained wide and even immense popularity. Buddha in short tried to make a religion of philosophy and failed.

The great vogue of Buddhism in India was due to the fact that though it denied the authority of the Vedas and the value of sacrifices, it was saturated with Hindu ethical ideals and the Hindu doctrine of Karma albeit emptied of the Hindu doctrine of the self. In his estimate of Buddhism Dr. Radhakrishnan is less than fair to the value of the Upanishads. He is not right when he says: "The contempt for ritualism was common to him and the Upanishads." Buddhism never affirmed the great affirmation of the Upanishads about *Ananda* (Bliss) being the core of being. *Nirvana* is no doubt suppression of suffering but that is all. Buddhist pessimism is unrelieved by the doctrine of *Ananda*. Its doctrine of the annihilation of personality (*Nirvana*) is at the opposite pole compared to the doctrine of the blissful Absolute (*Sachchidananda*).

Further, Buddhism erred in declaring that there is no permanent being and that all existence is momentary. Buddha, however, unlike Bergson, affirms that there is a law governing the perpetual dynamism of things. But he did not accept the Upanishadic doctrine of the Immutable Blissful Atman. He saw only becoming in being and not being in becoming. His denial of the self is based on a fundamental error of thought. Without a unifying self, there would be no perception or memory. One cognition cannot cognise another cognition. The different aspects of empirical consciousness must be connected in one self-unconsciousness. All the wonderful resources of Sri Sankaracharya's logic were employed in disproving this fundamental heretical error of Buddhism. Dr. Radhakrishnan is hence not correct when he says that "Buddhism is a return of Brahmanism to its own fundamental principles". It was Buddha's elevation of moral nature and the beauty of his ethical gospel combined with his crusade against caste and sacrifices that led to the temporary popularity of Buddhism. But its inner defects as described above led to its downfall. They are its denial of the soul, its assertion of the momentary and essentially unreal character of the world, and its doctrine of the annihilation of personality. In short, its assertion of annihilation led to its own annihilation.

The Hinayana represents the early sceptical Buddhist thought. Mahayana Buddhism represents the dilution of the true Buddhism

by bringing a God and devotion. Dr. Radhakrishnan says well : "The decline of early Buddhism, the rise of Mahayanism and the revival of Brahmanism all synchronised..... It (Mahayana) is the younger branch with Sanskrit, while the Hinayana is older with Pali as its language. The latter claims to represent the teachings of Gautama in its original form and to preserve the rationalistic, monastic and puritanic elements of his teaching. The Mahayana develops the doctrine in a mystical theological and devotional way. The Hinayana has maintained its supremacy in Ceylon and Burma, the Mahayana in Nepal and China." Thus early and original Buddhism taught that the world is unreal and that the self is a fiction. It denied God and emptied life of devotion. The learned author says: "By its abstract and negative tendencies the Hinayana became the incarnation of dead thought and the imprisonment of spirit. It gives us neither a warm faith for which to live nor a real ideal for which to work." Its morbid asceticism resulted in a revulsion of feeling and led to a rebound and reaction. The Sunyavada which holds that all is non-existence and the Vijnanavada which affirms that nothing exists except in consciousness were transformed in the Mahayana affirmation of the metaphysical substratum of permanence. The Mahayana tolerated the prevailing faiths and added only "a new respect for life, kindness to animals and resignation". An Adi Buddha was lifted by it to the throne from which the Hinayan. had driven God away. The Buddhas were regarded by it as the saviours of the world. Every individual was proclaimed by it to be a potential Buddha. The historic Buddha has Amitabha on one side and Avalokitesvara on the other. The Hindu gods were taken into the Mahayana pantheon but given a Buddhist setting. The Mahayana theory of Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya gave scope for metaphysics and theology and ethics. Bodhisattvas below the rank of Buddha were affirmed and took the place of the *arhats* of the Hinayana. They voluntarily desist from the attainment of Buddhahood so that they may work for the uplift and salvation of mankind. According to the Mahayana *nirvana* is not annihilation.

There were four schools of Buddhism. They are the *Vaibhashikas*, the *Sautrantikas*, the *Yogacharas* and the *Madhyamikas*. The Vaibhashika school of Direct Realism affirms the inner world of ideas as well as outer world of objects but states also that the objects which we see cease to exist when they are not perceived. Dr. Radhakrishnan states: "The self called Pudgala has no existence apart from the elements of personal life. The unity of the individual is a fiction for the continuous flow of mental states." It

was against this illogical heresy that the Vedanta Sutras and the irrefragable logic of Sri Sankara waged relentless and successful war. The Vaibhashikas and Sautrantikas accept the atomic theory and affirm only four elements, viz., earth, water, fire and air. The Sautrantikas (Indirect Realists) admit the existence of an extra-mental and objective world but contend that the outer objects are only momentary and that we have no direct perception of objects but only mental presentations from which we infer external objects. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "In opposition to the Vaibhashikas and the Madhyamikas, the Sautrantikas maintain that thought can think itself and that we can have self-consciousness." The Yogacharas assert that there are no objects independent of the mind and that all that we have are only clusters of sensations. They support the Vijñānavāda (Idealistic Phenomenalism) and say that the only reality is Vijñāna or consciousness. Thus their doctrine is pure idealism and subjectivism. The *Alaya Vijñāna* is an ever-changing stream of consciousness. Sri Sankaracharya employed all the resources of his logic to overthrow this theory. He points out that it fails to account for the variety of perception, and that there is disparateness between dream phenomena and the phenomena of the waking state. The waking state has pragmatic values. The Yogachara analysis of perception is opposed to our experience. We are always conscious of something and not merely conscious. If there be no outward objects why should consciousness take such forms of objects at all? Why should there be any certainty and order about such cognitions? What is the cause of the illusion of externality of things if the sense of such externality is an illusion? The Buddhists erred equally egregiously in denying the permanent self. The Madhyamikas (nihilists) went the length of saying that all things are *Sunya* or void and that even *Vijñāna* is unreal. Dr. Radhakrishnan says well, "Thus the Madhyamika abolishes the constant *alaya* and sets the stream of ideas adrift." Nagarjuna goes the length of saying that the world is unreal, that birth and death are unreal, that suffering and liberation are unreal, and that even the Buddha is unreal. This is an absolute negation of all values in life. Even Nirvana is an illusion! Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "Since to the Madhyamikas all thoughts and things are void, they are sometimes called Sarvaviavashikas. This view that the world with its suns and stars is nothing more than a baseless appearance, is quite in consonance with the popular classification of the four Buddhist schools into the Vaibhashikas or presentationists who admit the perceptibility of external objects; the Sautrantikas or representationists; the Yogacharas or subjectivists; and the Madhyamikas or nihilists." The original

Buddhist doctrine was the Madhyamika doctrine. It became more and more saturated with realism later on in the other schools of Buddhist philosophy.

Thus the Buddhistic schools of thought are based on negation, pessimism and nihilism of different degrees. One of them says that there are outside things and inner sensations of them; another could say that we know only inner sensations of outside things; or third says that there are no outside things at all but only inner sensations; and a fourth would say that everything is void. Dr. Radhakrishnan's analysis of their doctrines is brilliant and comprehensive but suffers from an unwillingness to assess them aright and an eagerness to make out *sunyavada* to be a little better than it is. The error of such an attempt attains its climax in the statement, P. 666 of Vol. I: "The Madhyamika theory is an Advaitism of the type of Sankara or Bradley, for the concept of self to it is not ultimate." An evaluation which equates Sankara's Advaita with the Madhyamika theory which he fought and refuted all his life has something fundamentally wrong in it. It is equally incorrect to affirm as the learned author does at P. 668: "The *Alata Santi* of Gaudapada's *Karikas* is full of Madhyamika tenets. The Advaitic distinction of Vyavahara, or experience, and Paramartha or reality, correspond to the Samvriti and Paramartha of the Madhyamikas. *The Nirguna Brahman of Sankara and Nagarjuna's Sunya have much in common.*" It is wrong to equate the Advaitic *anirvachniya* doctrine with the Madhyamika *nisswabhava* (void of reality) doctrine. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "It is a strange irony that the great exponents of the two doctrines look upon themselves as supporting antagonistic propositions." It is a stranger irony that there should be an attempt to assimilate the great exponents of antagonistic propositions in the realm of philosophic thought.

Thus Buddhism began as a Hindu schism and ended as a Hindu sect. When India had an ageless and wonderful pantheon and faith which appealed from the most ancient times to reason and devotion and imagination, where was the need for a parallel and diluted pantheon with an indeterminate doctrine about the nature of perfection and a vacillating view about the reality of the soul? Buddhism had no higher ethos than Hinduism and merely cut away men from their moorings by denying the revelatory character of the Vedas. A Buddhism which originally denied and latterly affirmed the soul and God, which at first denied and later on preached immortality, and which wavered in its pessimism and monasticism became a house divided against itself and was unable to stand against the resurgent Hinduism. Buddhist priests became opulent and immoral, and

Buddhist temples became filled with old and new deities and were centres of grandeur rather than centres of purity and holiness.

Thus Buddhism became diluted and weak and impotent and was absorbed into Hinduism and thus died a natural death in India. There was no violent extermination of it all. The polemics of Kumarila and Sankara hastened its disappearance and extinction. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "Uncompromising devotion to the moral law is the secret of the strength of Buddhism, and its neglect of the mystical side of man's nature the cause of its failure." Buddhism brought nothing new to Hinduism though it intensified the Hindu respect for life and kindness to the dumb creation. Dr. Radhakrishnan thinks that Buddhism introduced the note of pessimism from which later Indian thought never emerged. I do not think that this view represents the entire truth. Hindu thought, both before and after the Buddhist schism, knew the eternity of the bliss of Truth beyond the pain and the evanescence of relative being.

It is thus clear that Buddhism failed in India in spite of the sweet and lofty personality of its founder and its sublime ethics and its universal appeal to some of the noblest elements in human nature, because of its metaphysical weakness and its inability to appeal to the highest nature of man. Its attempt to create a parallel pantheon and to weave new epics in the shape of the Jataka tales for capturing the popular imagination and maintaining the popular allegiance and to create a new amalgam of cult and myth and ritual and philosophy—an attempt that has been sought to be revived to-day—could not bolster it up for a long time against the resurgent forces of revived and purified and sublimated Hinduism which went back for inspiration to the Vedas as the bedrock of truth and which derived sustenance especially from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. The re-risen flood of Hindu thought swept clean away Buddhism and its ramifications and manifestations.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

EDUCATION IN INDIAN VILLAGES

It is a fact known to all that India is one of the most backward countries in the world in the matter of education. Our politicians and publicists often blame the government for the inadequacy of the funds it allots for this vital concern, and rightly so. But we regret that the people on their part too do not evince sufficient interest in this matter. For, apart from some enlightened persons in towns the

average Indian villager does not consider education to be a necessary equipment for his children's welfare in life. The consequence of this is that even the little money that is allotted for this purpose is not usefully spent. The village schoolmasters neglect their duty, the villagers connive at it, and the result is that the boys going out of the village schools know next to nothing. The regrettable state of affairs obtaining in Indian village schools is vividly described by Sir John Campbell in an article entitled 'The Magistrate's Indian Diary', appearing in the May number of the Atlantic Monthly. The following is an extract from it :

".....At last I found the school. It was a rather decent building, as rural schools go in India ; but it seemed strangely silent and deserted.....I entered the main class room, to find no boys, but two well-fed and sturdy-looking country ponies ! The other rooms were locked. Of course no one had the key, or knew where it could be found ; so I solved the problem by getting the village blacksmith to wrench out the staple. One room was used as a store-house for cheap cloth. In the third I found the school furniture, registers, and so on,

"Without comment, I went through the attendance register with the crowd. It had not been written up for twenty days. 'Who is Ram Sahai, son of Ram Lal ?' 'There is no such person in the village.' 'And Maqbool Husain, son of Abdul Ghani ?' 'There is no such person.' 'Dullo, son of Kesri ?' Ah, yes ; but he died four months ago out of evil eye.' And so it went. Roughly, out of thirty-odd names, twenty-five were fictitious ; there were five pupils only, and they enjoyed what was practically a perpetual holiday.

"When the facts were clear, the crowd—again as usual—became informative. The teacher kept school occasionally, but usually he sold cloth in the surrounding villages. That was what the ponies were for. There might possibly be five pupils. The registers were fudged—the people evidently thought that reflected the greatest credit on the teacher's ingenuity and resourcefulness. 'Oh, yes—the inspector sahib has been here quite often to inspect. When he comes, the school is always full. The teacher arranges with relatives of his, teachers in villages not too distant, to send boys over, so that the classes will be full, and the inspector sahib will have boys to examine.' Everyone in the village knew the fraud ; no one did anything to stop it. The hard-working inspectors of schools, with an enormous area to cover, and dependent to a large extent on local hospitality could not make surprise visits. Everything fitted in nicely—but no one in the village got any education.

"The people thought that the government had a bee in its bonnet on this matter ; it preached the virtues of learning, in season and out of season, but the villagers were not impressed with the 'educated' products of the system ; and boys were useful, from a very early age, in herding goats, doing odd jobs about the house or the farm, playing with and looking after younger children. The parents had got on without being able to read or write ; that was, quite clearly, the business of the priest or the village accountant. One could not do everything. To send their children to school meant some hardship—some inconvenience at any rate ; and this thoughtful teacher has evolved a sound method which conciliated village opinion, avoided all difficulties with the powers that were, and incidentally gave the villagers something of a hold over him, which, they doubtless hoped, might materialize into cloth fractionally cheaper than otherwise obtainable.....

".....I visited the chief school at this centre shortly after the fair. The boys in the highest class were eighteen to nineteen years of age, and at the end of their purely vernacular education. They had been taught, from the age of about seven, in their own tongue. Of the thousands who have been poured out into the funnel, perhaps fifty had emerged. I was particularly interested in the final products. As mental arithmetic they were astonishingly good—far better, low be it spoken, than I myself. And yet they were not nearly good enough for the local bunnias and shopkeepers. They wrote the cramped Hindi, which is the language of the accountant here, with extraordinary ease. And, apart from these two acquirements, they knew nothing. They were not interested in anything else, nor were their parents....."

".....I agree with Roosevelt,—was n't it he?—who said that the Romans had never done anything half so fine as *the English achievement in India*. But 'this person,' as Kai Lung would say, thinks that on their roll of honour the word '*education*' will not be found."

Further comment is unnecessary. The standard of education received by the Indian villagers through the so-called munificence of the government has been rightly portrayed by this European writer who claims to have an intimate knowledge of the functionings of the village-life in India. This is the picture not merely of any particular village but of most of the Indian villages which, on account of the studied indifference of the government to the need of efficient primary education and the criminal negligence of the leaders of the country, have become the veritable abode of corruption and deep-seated superstition. It is time that the educational problem is earnestly taken up both by the government and our countrymen to organise village-life into a healthy nucleus of culture and strength and thereby lay the foundation for the future regeneration of the land.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Chaitanya to Vivekananda: Lives of the Saints of Bengal. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co, Madras. Price Rs. 1-8.

This book contains the lives of six saints, viz., Chaitanya, Sankara Deva, Hari Das, Ramprasad, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda—five of whom belong to Bengal and one is an Assamese. There are books extant at any rate in the vernaculars of India dealing with the lives of the saints of the North and South, and a book on the lives of the saints of Bengal has been a great desideratum which the book under review now supplies.

Lord Chaitanya appeared in Bengal at a time when on account of the ascendancy of the Mohammedan rule the Hindu religion was at a low ebb and the religious atmosphere was greatly vitiated by the abominable Tantric rites and the arrogance of Sanskrit pandits and scholars who simply indulged in intellectual gymnastics and ridiculed attempts at self-realization. How Lord Gauranga who was no exception to this sort of intellectual intoxication was thoroughly changed after he had come in contact with Ishwara Puri, a Vaishnava monk, how when he attempted to rescue the masses from their abject mental and moral turpitude by delivering them his message of Prema Bhakti he was beset by those jealous of him with well-nigh insuperable difficulties, how he surmounted them by embracing the Sannyasa Ashrama and how thereafter he launched successfully on the work of

reclaiming the people with missionary zeal and reforming enthusiasm are recounted in the book with a telling effect.

Haridas was a saint sprung from the untouchable community of Bengal and being a follower of Chaitanya endeared himself to the people by his genuine Bhakti and pure life. The low community to which he belonged was no bar to the people holding him in high reverence.

Sankarā Deva was born in Assam and he did the same work for the Asamese which Chaitanya did for Bengal and no less were the difficulties which he was put to by the wily Brahmin priestly class.

When Mohammedan rule was tottering and before British rule ensured its footing in Bengal, Ramprasad bridged, as it were, the transition period by renovating Tantric worship in his life, and the songs sung by him clearly reveal the depth of his feeling and their popularity shows the immense influence they exercised on the minds of the masses—an influence which is strongly felt even to-day.

Under the aegis of British rule which succeeded the Mohammedan supremacy a rude shock was given to the Hindu spiritual life by Western culture which threatened to swallow it. How Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa stemmed this tide of Western Realistic philosophy by pouring out incontestable ideas from within his realized self and by his perfect life of non-attachment to lust and gold and how his world-known disciple and apostle of Hinduism, Swami Vivekananda, spread his gospel to the wonder and amazement not only of his countrymen but also of the Western world which was forced to accept the greatness of Hinduism are very vividly and graphically described in the book under review.

This book is a very good primer of Hindu religion and philosophy and we strongly recommend it to all students of life and religion.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE BIRTH-DAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT BALIATI (BENGAL)

The 94th birthday celebration of Sree Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva was held on the 2nd June in the local Math premises. Nearly fifteen hundred Daridra Narayanas and devotees were sumptuously fed. The eighteenth annual meeting of the Mission branch was held in the afternoon with Dr. Jamini Ranjan Majumder, Ph. D., of the Bengal Social Service League in the chair. The annual report was read and prizes were distributed among the girls and boys of the free-schools conducted by the Mission. Speeches were delivered on the life and teachings of Sree Ramakrishna Deva and on Education. Lantern lectures were arranged on the life of Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda, village-organization and on agriculture.

FLOOD IN ASSAM: APPEAL FOR FUNDS

Details of the flood-havoc which has overtaken Assam, have reached us. The Mission received wires for help from different places. In response, we have already sent workers and have wired instructions to the Mission centre at Sylhet and Silchar to start relief work immediately. But public co-operation is the first thing we desire. So we are appealing to the generous public to send their kind contributions to any of the undermentioned addresses:—

- (1) R. K. Mission, Belur Math. P. O., Howrah.
- (2) R. K. Mission, Sylhet, Assam.

(SD.) SWAMI SUDDHANANDA, Secy., R. K. Mission:

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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PRAAYER

ॐ

जगतामादिभूतस्त्वं जगद्वं जगदाश्रयः ।

सर्वभूतेष्वसंयुक्त एकोभाति भवान्परः ॥

आकाशवत्त्वं सर्वत्र वहिरंतर्गतोऽमलः ।

असंगो ह्यचलो नित्यः शुद्धो बुद्धः सद्व्ययः ॥

देव मे यत्र कुलापि स्थिताय अपि सर्वदा ।

त्वत्पादक्रमले सक्ता भक्तिरेव सदाऽस्तु मे ।

नमस्ते पुरुषाथ्यच्च नमस्ते भक्तवतसल ।

नमस्तेऽस्तु हृषीकेश नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

Thou art, O Supreme Lord, the cause, the manifestation as well as the support of this universe; yet Thou shinest as the one existence unaffected by the changes of matter.

Stainless, Thou pervadest this universe both inside and outside like the sky; Thou art the uncontaminated, changeless, indestructible and untainted form of wisdom and truth, eternal.

Wherever I be, O Lord, may I have always an unflinching devotion to Thy lotus feet.

Salutation unto Thee, O Lord of all beings and Lover of devotees. Salutation unto Thee, O Narayana, who art the master of all senses.

ADHYATMA RAMAYANA.

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

I

It was 9 a.m., Sunday, the 23rd December, 1883. Sri Ramakrishna was sitting in the south-eastern veranda of his room at Dakshineswar with Rakhal, Latu, Mani, Harish and others. Manomohan also had come from Konnagar in the early morning. A Vaishnava was singing. He first sang about Sri Gouranga,—“Gouranga’s beautiful person was of the colour of burnished gold,” etc.—and then he sang a song on mental worship. When he finished, the Master said to Hazra, “This song on mental worship I could not appreciate much.”

Hazra: This is not for a *Sadhaka*. . . .

Sri Ramakrishna: I did not like it much. The songs of olden days were all right. I sang to the naked one (Tota Puri), ‘To arms! to arms! O man, death invades thy home in battle array!’ and another song, ‘O Mother, none is to blame; I dug a well and now I am drowning in the water.’ Though Tota was such a great *Jnani*, yet he began to weep even without understanding the meaning.

“How correctly worded is this song,—‘Ever think of the Lord, O mind, if thou wouldst end the fears of death!’

“Padmalochan was such a great scholar, but when he heard me sing a song of Ramprasad, he began to weep.”

Sri Ramakrishna took his mid-day meal and rested a little. The temple music began to play, which filled the Master with joy. He explained to Mani who was sitting on the floor of the Master’s room, that Brahman Himself had become the universe.

He said, “Some one told me that in a certain place there was no singing of the name of Hari. At once I saw that He had become all beings, just as there are innumerable bubbles on water. Sometimes I see the beings like innumerable cones (made of the substance of Brahman).

“While at Burdwan on my way from Kamarpukur, I ran towards the fields to see how creatures eat and live there. I saw ants going in a long row. Every place is full of *Chaitanya* (Consciousness),

Hazra came and sat on the floor.

Sri Ramakrishna : I see beings like various flowers with layers of petals as it were, and like big and small bubbles.

While thus relating his visions, the Master went into *Samadhi*. He said, "I have become, I have come," and at once plunged deep into *Samadhi* and became absolutely still.

A long while after, he slowly regained normal consciousness. He began to laugh like a child and walk in the room. Light of bliss shone from his eyes as if he had beheld a wondrous vision. Smile graced his lips, but his look was vague.

He said, "I saw the Paramahansa whom I had seen under the peepul tree. He passed smiling in this way. Have I now the same state as he?"

He sat down on the smaller bedstead and began to speak with the Divine Mother. He said, "Let it go, I do not want to know. O Mother, may I have pure devotion at Thy lotus-feet!"

To Mani he said, "When one gets rid of all mental disturbances and desires, one reaches this state."

And he continued, "Mother, You have put an end to my ceremonial worship, but may I not give up all desires! Mother, a Paramahansa is a boy. Does not a boy want a mother? Therefore you are my Mother and I am Your child. How can a child live without his mother?"

Such was the plaintive tone in which he spoke with the Divine Mother that it seemed to melt even stone. He said, "Only the knowledge of the Absolute?—I spit on it. As long as you have retained my 'I', so long you must also be there. A Paramahansa is only a boy. Should not a boy have his mother?"

The sight of this ecstasy of the Master filled Mani with speechless wonder. And Hazra cried out with folded hands, "Oh blessed, blessed you are!" Sri Ramakrishna said to him, "But you have no faith. You are here for the development of *Lila* like *Jatila* and *Kutila*."*

In the evening Mani was walking alone in the Temple, and thinking of the wonderful spiritual condition of the Master. Why did the Master say that that condition was reached when all mental

*When the Lord was born as Sri Krishna, *Jatila* and *Kutila*, the relatives of Radha had a strict eye on her.

disturbances and desires had been got rid of? Who was Sri Ramakrishna? Was he God Himself incarnate? He himself had said that none could return from the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* except the Divine Incarnations and *Iswara-Kotis*.

II

Next day at 8 in the morning Sri Ramakrishna was speaking with Mani at the *Jhau-tala*. It was winter. The sun had just risen. The Master stood facing the east. He said, "Both *Nirakara* and *Sakara* are true. The naked one (Totapuri) used to say that Brahman was like an infinite ocean with water everywhere, above and below, in the right and in the left. The Causal Essence is like calm water. When the water is agitated, there are waves. The waves in the Brahman are creation, maintenance and dissolution. He would also say that Brahman is where all reason stops, just as camphor when it is burnt consumes itself and leaves no ashes behind.

"Brahman is beyond word and mind. A salt doll went to measure the sea. It never returned to report. It had melted in the sea itself.

"The Rishis said to Rama, 'Bharadwaja and some other Rishis may call you a Divine Incarnation. But we do not. We worship the *Sabda Brahman* (the Word which is Brahman). We do not want to realise Brahman in the human form.' Rama smiled in pleasure and passed on after receiving their homage.

"But even He who is eternal is also the relative, just as I said that the roof and the stairs are the same substance.

"There are various kinds of *Lila*, Divine manifestation: *Iswara-lila* (manifestation as God), *Deva-lila* (manifestation as gods and goddesses), *Nara-lila* (manifestation as man), and *Jagat-lila* (manifestation as the universe). In His manifestation as man, He becomes the *Avatara*. Do you know how it is? It is like water falling torrentially through a pipe from a vast terraced roof. The Divine Incarnation is the channel through which the powers of Satchidananda manifest themselves. Only twelve Rishis including Bharadwaja could recognise Rama as the Divine Incarnation. All cannot know the *Avatara*.

"The Lord becomes the *Avatara* in order to teach men *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. Well, what do you think of me?

"My father went to Gaya. There Raghuvir appeared to him in a dream saying that He would become his son. Father said, 'Lord, I am a poor Brahmin. How shall I serve you?' Raghuvir said, 'It will be all right.'

"My elder sister, Hriday's mother, used to worship my feet with flowers and sandal-paste. One day Mother made me place my foot on her head and say that she would die in Benares.

"Sajo Babu (Mathuranath) said, 'Baba, there is nothing inside you except God. Your body is only a case just like a pumpkin with no pulp or seeds within. I saw you as if some one was going covering himself with a veil.'

"Everything is revealed to me beforehand. At Panchavati I saw the *Sankirtan* party of Sri Gauranga. I think I saw Balaram in that party and you too.

"Once I wanted to know the *Bhava* of Sri Gauranga. It was shown me in that village, Shyambazar. So many people came that some even found place on trees and walls. Day and night they remained with me. For seven days I had no time even to wash myself. Then I prayed to Mother, 'Mother, let this end. That is why I am calm now. I shall have to come again. Therefore I am not giving full knowledge to my intimate disciples. (Smiling) For if I do, you will not easily come to me.

"I recognised you by hearing your reading of the *Chaitanya-Bhagavatam*. You are my own. We are of the same substance like father and son. All are coming here like water-creeper. When you pull one end, the whole mass comes. You are all related to one another, like brothers. Suppose Rakhai and Harish have gone to Puri. You also have gone. Will you have separate lodgings?

"So long as you did not come here, you forgot yourself. Now you will know yourself. He comes in the form of Guru to make man know who he is.

"The naked one told the story of a tigress and a flock of goats. Once a tigress attacked a flock of goats. A hunter saw it from a distance and killed it. The tigress was big with a cub. It gave birth to it while dying. The cub grew with the goats. At first it sucked milk from the goats and then began to eat grass. It also learnt to bleat like a goat.

"Gradually it became quite big. But it still grazed and bleated; and when any animal attacked, it fled like the goats.

"One day a terrible tiger fell upon the flock of goats. It was astonished to see another tiger feeding upon grass like the goats and running with them. So it did not trouble the goats but caught hold of the tiger. It began to bleat and wanted to run away. The tiger then dragged it to the side of water and said, 'Just look at your face in the water. See, your face is also as big and round as mine.' He next thrust a bit of flesh into its mouth. At first the goat-tiger would not eat it. But when it tasted it a little, it began to eat. The tiger then said to it, 'you were living with goats and eating grass like them! Fie on you!' and it felt ashamed.

"What is 'eating grass'? It is living engrossed in woman and gold. To bleat like goats and run away is to behave like the ordinary man. To go away with the tiger is to take refuge in the Guru who imparts the true knowledge and to look upon him as one's own. To see one's real appearance is to know one's true self."

Having spoken thus he passed on towards the *Panchavati*. Mani followed him spell-bound. At *Panchavati*, the Master stopped where a big branch of the banyan tree had fallen down, and made a deep obeisance touching the terrace, built round the tree, with his forehead. Here he had practised *Sadhana*. Here he had cried disconsolate and agonisingly for the revelation of the Divine Mother. Here he had seen many Divine visions and had held many conversations with Divine Mother. Is that why whenever he came there, he saluted the place?

The Master passed on and met Hazra near the *Nahavat*. He said to Hazra, "Do not eat too much. And give up the mania for external purification. Those who are so fastidious about formal purity cannot have knowledge. Observe only that much of forms as is necessary, but do not do it too much."

The Master went into his room.

THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL INDIA—I

The corporate life of India is not to be considered as an isolated entity in the realm of human culture. As the world stands today, every force working in one part of the globe towards the evolution of one race-ideal, cannot but have, to some extent, its repercussion in the functionings of the rest of humanity. The world has reached a stage when exclusivism will be a fatal experiment. A process of assimilation of one another's culture has become a vital necessity. The dead wall of separation has been demolished and the tide of world-forces has been beating constantly on the shore of human experience. There is consequently a clash of ideals and interests, both material and spiritual, all over the world. India has also, of late, felt in no uncommon measure the impact of the wave of occidental civilisation. The indigenous notions and systems have come into conflict with the new ideas and processes. And in this ferment she is seeking a reformulation of her life-principle, and an adjustment that must suit her national individuality. But the problems of Indian life are so inter-related that any change wrought upon one department of life is sure to react upon the other. Even the rural well-being of the people cannot be sought to be advanced without an eye to the economic and social values of our organic life. The inter-relation of social and economic influences in rural progress is so persistent and obvious that an effective tackling of the problems of rural India demands an adequate understanding and appreciation of the true import of her economic and social issues along with their significant bearing on the spiritual life of the people. Naturally therefore, while dealing with the economic, rural, political or social life of our country one must as well possess a synthetic vision to realise the process that must tend to stimulate its all-round growth and produce a harmony between the apparently conflicting interests of the race. The modern clash of systems has brought into bold prominence the problems of India's rural life, and never did they so seriously force themselves upon our attention as they have done today. This aspect of India's problems has so long been scrupulously ignored in the rough and tumble of political agitation, though it is a truism that without a proper solution of her rural problems, the

salvation of India shall ever remain an empty dream. The painful spectacle of modern India, denuded of all her pristine glory and grandeur, cannot but fill every heart with profound indignation and sorrow. Once a land of fabulous wealth and a veritable El Dorado, India stands today a beggar before the bar of humanity ! It was the wealth of India that fed the greedy races of the world and tempted many a freebooter to pounce upon her from time to time and despoil her of all her priceless treasures. But the healthy rural life of India—a life of plenty and profusion built upon the unceasing toil of the bold peasantry of the land—has sunk into a vague tradition of the past. India has become the dumping-ground of the world's exploiting races. Subject to a ruthless policy of drainage, India has reached the lowest water-mark in the history of her economic life. The morale of the peasantry,—the backbone of the country,—has been ruined and along with it, her industrial possibilities have been shamelessly smothered under alien administration. Needless to point out that in a country like India where more than 72 p.c. of her population belong to the agricultural class, an adequate safeguard of the multiple interests of the peasantry is an indispensable condition of her healthy economic life. It cannot be gainsaid that this aspect of the national problem has, to our misfortune, failed to enlist the active services of our trusted leaders to the extent it should. And the result is that the vast mass of humanity still stands outside the pale of all political activities without sharing any kind of responsibility with them, though in fact it is the silent toil of the peasantry that furnishes the sinews of war in the struggle of the nation for political advance. The life of this mute section of India's population is a power which cannot be ignored without a serious detriment to the ultimate well-being of the country. It is therefore quite in the fitness of things that the problems of rural India must be given a place of honour in all our schemes for national reconstruction.

The present atrophied state of India's economic life would hardly warrant any one to believe that she was the feeder of nations till the beginning of the 19th century. The history alone tells us how within a century and a half India like a milch cow, has been drained almost dry of all her boundless resources. Frederick John Shore (formerly, of

the Bengal Civil Service) has rightly remarked: "The halcyon days of India are over; she has been drained of a large proportion of the wealth she once possessed, and her energies have been cramped by a sordid system of misrule, to which the interests of millions have been sacrificed for the benefit of the few." This has been fully corroborated by another high European functionary, Mr. John Sullivan, who was at one time a member of the Government of Madras. He says: "Under *their* own dynasties all revenue that was collected in the country was spent in the country; but under *our* rule a large proportion of the revenue is annually drained away, and without any return being made of it. This drain has been going on, and it is rather increasing than the reverse.....Our system acts very much like a sponge drawing up all the good things from the banks of the Ganges and squeezing them down on the banks of the Thames." This is the testimony, not of Indians but of accredited European officials holding responsible positions in the administration of British India. But persons are not still wanting who, in order to magnify the benefits of British rule in India, have gone the length of denying the soundness of her rural and economic system, so highly spoken of by the historians and foreign travellers. That an industrious and peaceful peasantry peopled the fair villages of India and cultivated and irrigated the endless expanse of fertile fields while the artisans in towns carried the various manufactures and arts of peace to a high state of excellence and that the manufactures of India were known to the merchants of Assyria and Babylon, Phoenicia and Egypt, Sumatra and Java and to the far-off lands of the western world is a fact testified to by a host of European travellers. Megasthenes who was for sometime an ambassador in the Court of Chandrugupta Maurya and had an ample opportunity of studying the condition of the then India remarks in the *Indica*: "There are many vast plains of great fertility, more or less beautiful, but all alike intersected by a multitude of rivers. The greater part of the soil moreover is under irrigation, and consequently bears two crops in the course of the year...In addition to cereals, there grows throughout India much millet which is kept well watered by the profusion of river streams, and much pulse of different sorts, and rice also, and what is called bosporum, as well as many other plants useful for food, of which most grow spontaneously...

Famine has never visited India, and that there has never been general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food...The Indians are skilled in the arts, as might be expected of men who inhale a pure air and drink the very finest water..... The soil has under ground numerous veins of all sorts of metals, for it contains much gold and silver, and copper and iron in no small quantity, and even tin and other metals, which are employed in making articles of use and ornaments, as well as the implements and accoutrements of war." The accounts of Arrian and Strabo, Pliny and the like testify also to the same effect. Besides, the celebrated Chinese travellers, Fahien and Hiuen Tsang, have laid us under a deep sense of obligation by leaving behind them priceless records of their varied experiences in India. They have given a pen-picture of the life and activities of the Indians of their time, and have clearly pointed out that India was a highly prosperous country and the arts and crafts attained to a high level of excellence. *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, an authoritative book on India's maritime activities, furnishes a glowing picture of her trading relations with the far-off lands of the West as well as of the precious articles exported from the Indian shores to the foreign territories.

The history of the Mahommedan period tells almost the very same tale. For, there was in fact no break in the continuity of India's cultural life. The Moslems accepted India as their motherland, and all their hopes and aspirations became inextricably blended up with the welfare of those over whom they were destined to rule in India; not a single farthing received from the Indian taxpayer, did ever go beyond the boundary of India to fill the coffers of the Muslims abroad. And so long as the integrity of Moslem sovereignty was maintained, the children of the soil did never experience the bitterness of economic atrophy which has become a veritable canker in our modern life. There are at present evident signs of decline in the various departments of our national life. The great majority of the industrial population of India lived in the villages, and most of them were artisans and plied their occupations uninfluenced by the outside world. In the bigger cities on the other hand each craft was organised into efficient guilds occupying an important position in India's economic activity. Indian urban industry reached a high standard of excellence and

maintained a world-wide reputation even till the beginning of the 19th century. But it must be remembered that the economic life of a town or city is meaningless without reference to the lands which furnish its food and raw materials, and the villages from which labour is imported. Prof. Gilbert Slater pertinently observes: "The importance of rural activities and of village life in India, in view of the enormous preponderance of its agricultural population over that engaged in mining, manufacturing, commerce and transport, is not to be overlooked." The records show that even at the beginning of the 19th century the chief industry was the textile handicrafts of which the cotton industry was the foremost. And this is also corroborated by Dr. J. F. Royle who observes: "Before the 19th century India was chiefly famous for exporting her elegant fabrics to the most civilised nations in the world." The muslin of Dacca (Bengal) is still a wonder in the realm of world's industrial life. Abbe de Guyon writing in 1774 says: "From Dacca comes the best and finest embroideries in gold, silver and silk, and those embroidered neck-cloths and fine muslins which are seen in France." Every student of the economic history of India naturally feels tempted to enquire where are today those finest products of Indian industry that excited the admiration of the world only a century and a half ago. The chintzes of Lucknow, palampore industry of Madras and fabrics of Madura have now become a rarity in the country. Murshidabad, Maldah and many other towns of Bengal are no longer the proud seats of pristine silk-manufactures. Kashmere and Amritsar, Ludhiana and other cities of the Punjab have lost all reputation for woollen products. The brass, copper and bell-metal wares of Benares, Nasik, Poona, Hyderabad, Vizagapatam and Tanjore were marvels in the pre-British rule, and the artistic works, especially enamelled jewellery, stone-carving, etc., of the different towns of Rajputana were objects of genuine pride and glory in the country. Is it not a wonder that a country which had the proud privilege of producing such finest industries even two centuries back, has, by a mysterious process, been made incapable of exhibiting their pristine skill and brought down to the lowest level of poverty? Famines which were never witnessed in the ancient and medieval ages in India began to visit the land at regular intervals with the advent of the European Imperialism!

And according to the official reckoning of the last 25 years of the 19th century, it is found that there were 18 famines and the estimated loss of life due to them totalled 26 million lives. To-day India has become a land of famines and scarcity, and 'the sole aspiration of the poor ryot in India is that he may not die of starvation before his next harvest be ripe.' Is it not a fact that the daily income per capita in India does not exceed As. 1-6 while in England and America it goes even beyond Rs. 6-12 and Rs. 9-8 respectively? Diseases of the most virulent type are taking a heavy toll of lives every year, and the statistics show that while death per thousand in India is 24·5, that in England and America is not more than 9·8 and 9·5 respectively. In fact people here are dying by millions of malaria, and other fell diseases, all brought about by insanitation, deep poverty, sloth, idleness and ignorance. In view of the existing state of things it would not be surprising to learn that the influenza epidemic of 1918 swept away 72 lacs of people within 6 months in British India alone!

This is the real India to-day, and very few even care to know the mysterious process that has transformed the *prosperous* India into a land of *poverty* and diseases. The black records of the East India Company reveal the horrible atrocities and cruelties perpetrated upon the peaceful agricultural and industrial population of India. The handicrafts were ruthlessly ruined, and the healthy village systems were broken down to make room for outlandish institutions. Mr. H. M. Howsin emphatically avers in *The Significance of Indian Nationalism*: "The genesis of this poverty in India may be traced to the early days of the Company's rule, when in addition to pillage and extortion, the rich manufactures of India were deliberately killed by excessive pro-British duties and unfair monopolies, and the surplus population thrown on the land in an utterly destitute condition, there to be subjected to severe and ceaseless taxation. The much augmented agricultural population have never had the opportunity to recuperate their exhausted energies and resources...The immediate cause of the awful poverty is the unrelenting pressure of the land tax, which prevents the accumulation of any capital wherewith to meet an unproductive season." An organised system of exploitation is even now being carried on in the country. India has now moreover to contend with the triple forces of imperialism, feudalism and

capitalism. Besides the huge amount paid in coin in the shape of imperial charges in and outside India, India is to export more than three quarters of her agricultural produce. Even if the exports of only a few staple articles of food of India are taken into consideration we will find to our surprise that every year about 40 crore rupees worth of rice, 14 crore rupees worth of wheat, 16 crore rupees worth of pulse and 9 crore rupees worth of ground-nut are exported from the shores of India. It would not therefore be an exaggeration to say that India is becoming feebler day by day. *The very life blood of the great multitude is slowly yet ever faster ebbing away.* The baneful effects of such economic drainage in India will be all the more patent when the exact nature of exports and imports is taken into consideration. "The story of India's exports," says Mahatma Gandhi, "is a story of our impotence and the criminal indifference of the Government to the well-being of the people." Imports include cotton manufactures of 65 crores, artificial silk 4 crores, sugar 18 crores, metals and their manufactures 23 crores, motor-vehicles 5 crores, liquors 3 crores, cigarettes nearly 2 crores of rupees. These imports too tell the same tale of our impotence where it is not worse. Imports of a country in a healthy state of progress should be such as the country may need for its growth. The imports mentioned here are not needed for our growth. Liquor and cigarettes promote our degradation. Cotton manufacture which is the largest item among the imports discovers our shame and wretchedness. They remind us of what *villagers* must have been when they were manufacturing all that cloth in their own homes with their own hands. The above figures thus reveal to us the festering sore that is eating into the vitals of the people and undoubtedly unfold before humanity the painful picture of India's life of shame and humiliation. But still India must live, and live to see her once more emancipated from the tentacles of foreign imperialism and restored to the pristine position of unchallenged material and spiritual greatness. The problems are so baffling and varied that it is quite impossible to make an exhaustive analysis of them here. The interaction of the different forces has moreover added to the complexity of the situation; but a way must be found out of this welter of chaos. A brief sketch of the present needs to cope with the problems of our rural life may be attempted in our next.

THE WAY TO REALIZE THE LORD

By Sridhar Majumdar, M. A.

Brahman, the Lord, the Cause of the Universe, has been described in the Upanishads as incomprehensible and as having infinite forms :—
“अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तरूपम्” (Who is incomprehensible, unspeakable and infinite in form),—Kaivalyopanishad. Part 1, 6. To think of such an inconceivable and infinite Being with our finite mind is to make the perceiving mind itself infinite and inconceivable also, which means the total suspension of the operations of the mind. This total suspension of the operations of the mind has been described in the Patanjali Yoga-Sutra as union with the Lord, and such a state, as recovering one's own real self. Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna told a parable to his disciples that once an idol made of salt went to measure the depth of the ocean ; it dived for the purpose; the consequence was that it melted in the ocean. Similar becomes the state of our limited intellect in attempting to gauge the limitless Lord.

The illustrious Sankara, in reiterating Vedanta in his Nirvana Shataka, says that the mind, the intellect, the ego and the like are not the Soul :—“ॐ मनोबुद्धयहङ्कारचित्तादिनाहम्” (I am not the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego, nor the thoughtful mind and the like),—Nirvana Shataka, I. So the activities of the mind, the intellect and the ego are to be ignored with a view to reach the Soul; which can be done only by suspending the operations of the mind, that is, by being relieved of all cares and anxieties. One may apprehend that to remain in such a state in total suspension of the functions of the mind is to become perfectly inert without any sense of joy or sorrow ; but those who have experiences of these matters bear witness that there is immense bliss in such a state. The following few quotations, among many, from the Sruti will bear out the truth :—

“प्रशान्तवृत्तिकं चित्तं परमानन्ददीपकम्

असम्प्रज्ञात नामायं समाधिर्योगिनां प्रियः”

(The pacified state of the mind *affording extreme bliss*, known as Asamprajnata Samadhi or complete abstraction, is dear to the ascetic).

“लयात् संप्राप्यते सौख्यं स्वात्मानन्दं परं पदम्” (From dissolution of the mind arise joy and the highest desirable thing, the *bliss* inherent in Self),—Yoga Sikkhapanishad, Chap. I, 136. “सुखमायन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिप्राप्तमतीन्द्रियम्” (Where there is *extreme bliss*, revealed only to the intellect and transcending the senses),—Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Chap. VI, 21.

There is no hope of emancipation unless and until the limited soul is brought into tune with the limitless everlasting Universal Soul, Brahman ; in case of such a harmony, the attributes of the Universal Soul, such as, omnipresence, omniscience and bliss unmixed begin to manifest themselves even while in this mortal body (*vide* Brahma Sutra, Chap. IV, 15-16 and 21). This harmony can be effected only by bringing the mind to perfect stillness by quenching all desires ; but there is no hope so long as there remains the least desire for sense enjoyments in the mind ; the mind should be made completely free from all thoughts ; that is, there should be complete resignation to the Lord, the Universal Soul, in body and mind, by perfect relaxation of all the limbs and total suspension of the operations of the mind. Passionlessness, desirelessness and thoughtlessness are the landmarks of this pilgrimage.

All the worldly sorrows and pleasures are but the creations of the mind ; these joys and sorrows depend on the characteristics of one's own thought. A man may be happy if he thinks himself so even in the midst of sorrows and *vice versa*. So to rise above all these worldly joys and sorrows is to suspend the functions of the mind ; and then only does the unparalleled Bliss of Brahman glimpse forth.

A man, whose mind has become tranquillised and has been trained to be concentrated in one thing, is qualified to meditate on Brahman. Control of the mind arises from absence of all anxieties. To conquer the whole world is trivial to a man who can conquer the mind. To conquer the mind, as said by the renowned Trailanga Swami of Benares to his beloved disciple, Uma Charan Mukhopadhyaya, is nothing else but to remain in the state of Brahman, that is, to keep in suspension the functions of the mind. The inherent attribute of the mind is changefulness ; to reach Brahman is to cease this continuous rippling of the mind. There is no other means to realise the Soul except by conquering the mind, or in other words by bringing the mind to perfect stillness by calming down all thoughts. It is the mind which suffers the consequences of all actions and enjoys the joys or sorrows ; and strictly speaking it is also the mind which attains emancipation. In the very attempt to bring the mind to perfect stillness with a view to realize the limitless Lord, Brahman, the breath comes to a standstill and the functions of the mind are arrested. This automatic suspension of the breath leads to salvation :—"वायुं निरुध्य भेषावी जीवन्मुक्तो भवत्ययम्"—(The wise man by suspending the breath becomes liberated even while living),—Yogatattvopaniṣad, Chap. I, 106.

Constant practice of cessation of all thoughts or in other words, of suspension of the operations of the mind, in the above way, leads

one to a state of perfect abstraction, known as Nirvikalpa Samadhi, where there is no distinction between the subject and the object, where the finite soul becomes totally absorbed in the Universal Soul, where the mind and ego, all relativity and dualism disappear and absolute monism prevails, where neither the sun nor the moon shines, where neither star nor lightning flashes, where perfect serenity prevails without any disturbance from the bustles and tumults of the world which is a state of repose, a sense of perfect fullness and of pure self-existence, consciousness and bliss absolute, and not of non-existence nor of total annihilation ; even the seers who have experienced such a state cannot describe it fully but conclude by saying that it is unspeakable and inexpressible by means of any linguistic medium ; this is a state where no worldly joys and sorrows, no atmospheric heat and cold can disturb the nerve-centres, but absolute bliss predominates ; where the mind and intellect remain in suspension in a state beyond wakefulness, beyond dream and beyond even dreamless sleep ; where Self, the Supreme Ruler, shines alone in Its pristine glory. This state of perfect abstraction is not a wakeful nor a dreaming state, as there is no exercise of the volition in it ; it is neither a state of dreamless sleep, as the latter is only a state of dull nescience while the former rises superior to such dullness and acts like fire burning down countless desires to ashes ; but it is a superconscious state, known as the Turia or the fourth state, where the finite self is in communion, or rather in union, with the Infinite Self, the Lord ; it is a state of refuge of the former in the latter. It is a state where the mind serenely rests in the Lord alone, freed from all longings of the heart and cravings of the flesh, just like a lamp burning steadily on, sheltered from the gusts of the wind ; where the mind, absolutely restrained by the practice of concentration or rather by habitual relaxation, attains stillness, and where seeing the Self by the self, one is satisfied with one's own Self ; where one experiences that immense bliss which is revealed only to the intellect but which transcends the senses ; established wherein, the Yogin never departs from his real state ; and having obtained which, he regards no other acquisition superior ; and seated wherein he is not moved even by the heaviest sorrow (*vide* Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Chap. VI, 18-22). To remove the apprehension that this is only a state of unconsciousness, it will not be out of place to mention here that Acharya Badarayana Vysa shows in his Brahma Sutra (Chap. IV, IV, 16) by citing different Srutis that what is stated in Sruti about specific non-cognition or total unconsciousness on the part of the finite soul, while in union with the Lord, is either regarding deep sleep or regarding death, but not regarding the state of the released soul who still retains full consciousness.

This is our goal ; this is the *summum bonum* of our existence ; and every one should stake all that he holds dear to attain this end.

AKBAR AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

(From a Comparative Perspective)

(Continued from the last issue)

By *Svami Nirlepananda*

The Problem of Religions.—Let us next revert to religion. It has been very well said that to the sixteenth century statesman, this had been a problem of problems. Akbar himself was just appearing before the Indian population after a vehement storm of Muslim intolerance and persecution (viz., Firoj Tuglak's policy). He had to put forth all his tact in tackling this burning question. The Hindu-Muslim misunderstanding of those days had also attained an acute stage. Contemporary European statesmen also were just on the threshold of a new age of Reformed Faith and rational points of views. The heat and animation of a struggle between the conservative Catholics and the rational Protestants, was keenly felt by every one of them ; in each particular people there could be viewed a special expression. It was an intensely determinate, pregnant moment. A universal spirit was working uniformly in the arena of human history. The age of Reformation had already ushered into prominence a ring of illustrious and zealous reformers like Luther, Calvin and Knox. It must not be forgotten that there was a fundamental difference between the Indian and the European situations. The struggle between Islamism and Hinduisim was marked inherently throughout by a far greater rancour and intolerance and was attendant consequently with enormous difficulties than its prototype-dispute between Protestantism and Catholicism. There was a greater possibility of Catholicism meeting half-way with Protestantism. Comparatively speaking Akbar's problem was more complex and studded with misunderstanding at every step.

So Akbar must be allotted the greater credit for the admirable way in which he solved the problem. He had always an open heart, susceptible of receiving liberal sentiments in religion. Sufism which was an adaptation of Vedantic doctrines in an Islamic garb found him as its first, sincere, royal patron. He was a true upholder of Eclecticism. Although he was himself of Islamic persuasion he sometimes dressed himself like a devout Hindu and practised Hindu systems of

worship and prayers. It bore great spectacular and practically healthy effects.

He gave a patient ear to the apologists of every faith and finally reached his own conclusions. The faith which he established had its firm basis on the strong ground of non-sectarianism. The "Din Illahi," although a mere collection of excellent moral rules from almost all the then extant faiths, produced admirable results. It sounded a new era of religious toleration long unheard of by the Indians. The invidious Jiziah and Pilgrim Taxes were events of yesterday. He hated class-divisions, mutual clashes and the fanning of feelings of communalism. Speaking generally the baneful doctrine of 'Divide and Rule' had no place in his governmental institute. Every one was free to pursue his own faith unmolested by governmental regulations. Much was done to precipitate loving feelings between the rulers and the ruled. There was not the least bloodshed anywhere on the score of religion. We may find fault with the inherent weaknesses of his scheme of faith discursively, dialectically or metaphysically. It could not offer *bona fide* lives of prophets and saints behind its teachings. These *living sermons* alone can help to make a religion stay in human society. All this is true. Yet we cannot deny the practical results of his scheme so long as Akbar was there.

Now, let us turn to his contemporaries so that we may ascertain his real place in their rank. They produced quite a different picture and the contrast is quite marked. Wherever we turn—towards French, English or Germanic rulers, we are sure to meet with bloodshed. A host of Cranmers and Latimers had literally to offer their life-blood to justify the right of independent thought in matters of faith. Religious *fracas* curdle our blood. Gradually and systematically they reached a gruesome point later on in the cursed stakes which ended many a sincere soul. The massacre of St. Bartholomew was just an extreme type in which untold assassinations and persecutions reached their zenith. Even Elizabeth who at first solved the problem on a non-sectarian basis by her "*via media*" policy, had later on to champion a partisan cause: earlier than this she stained her fame by the shedding of blood. The French potentates, beginning from Francis I up to Charles IX without exception adopted a persecuting policy against the Protestants. Many of the European rulers were persons of not much religious conviction (viz, Elizabeth). They mostly cared for power and material gain and to them religion was only an instrument for serving political ends. Catherine de Medici, the moving figure in the sixteenth century French politics, the illustrious Elizabeth and Emperor Maximilian II are cases in point. Maurice of Saxony shone so nobly in his religious championship just because his self-interest

accidentally coincided with a particular faith. Of Akbar such a remark can never be hazarded. Of course we cannot say of Charles V that he too had no religious conviction specially when we know that he had an idea of purging Catholicism of its evils and abuses by summoning a General Council. His attempt to enforce the "*Interim*" by arms shows him also in his true colour. Owing to enormous physical power at its back royal opinion is thus prone to become obtrusive and shall we say, *painfully* assertive too? It seldom can resist the temptation of *exact*ing conformity at the point of bayonet. The doctrines comprised in Charles' scheme were mainly Catholic with certain tinges of toleration. "The *Interim* shows clearly how Charles' head had been turned by his success and how little conception he had of the real meaning and force of religious belief" (Lodge). On the whole, it must be admitted that Charles failed in his solution of the religious problem. With his son Philip II the failure was still more shameful.

Statesmen as Social Reformers.—Now, let us consider the statesman as social reformers. Like Elizabeth, Akbar also showed zeal in matters of social reform. The former by passing measures like Poor Laws showed her keen interest to free the social body of its evils and the latter by his discouragement of the practices of early marriage and Suttee (compulsory self-immolation of widows). We may also say that Akbar by his personal example encouraged inter-caste or more properly inter-communal marriage. Of course it cannot be denied that his matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs were mostly dictated by political considerations, much more than social aims. One point is to be clearly remembered in this connection. Akbar's attempts in these directions were marked throughout by the total absence of radicalism. Therefore he never had recourse to state regulations by the passing of compulsory laws. He knew where the susceptibilities of his subjects lay and his method was one of peace and moderation. There was more of constructive genius in Akbar than mere destructive criticism. Many of his contemporaries do not at all appear in their role as social reformers; even in those few who do so we seek in vain for Akbar's tact.

Administrative Problems: (a) Law.—Next let us see the statesman as administrators when they had to tackle problems such as army, navy, finance, legislation and provincial Government. Excepting legislation Akbar showed his pre-eminence more or less in all these matters. Solyman, the Magnificent, whose military genius and exploits are made much of by European historians, is praised specially the more by his countrymen as one who reformed and reconstructed their legal system. To them he is fondly termed as "*Kanuni*"

or Lawgiver. Akbar cannot claim praises like him on this ground.

(b) *Army*.—Elizabeth reformed her army and improved the navy. The supremacy of Britain as a first class maritime power dates from her reign. A golden chapter of British History begins after the famous Spanish Armada was ousted. The territorial expansion of England came in its wake. The first charter to the East India Company was granted by her. Henceforth England becomes a colonial power. She wakes up to build gradually an Empire on the Eastern waters. These are some of the unparalleled, almost brightest features of Elizabethan England from her national point of view.

Every statesman who had to do the fighting business had as a rule to look after army efficiency. But probably none had to combat against age-long abuses of a military system which in itself was inherently, constitutionally weak and offbeat. Yet such exactly was the lot of Akbar. The Mughal military system was a mere transplantation of the Central Asian system of Tamerlane in its entirety,—taking no consequence of the immediate difficulties of the Indian environment. The atmosphere, condition and soil were all different. Therefore the growth of the plant was stunted and it had to be kept alive by a great many artificial stimulants. Consequently in course of time the vicious practice of estimating men's worth in terms of cavalry gave birth to untold abuses. The Mansabdary system came to mean an organised treachery. In state-papers the Mansabdars were supposed to keep and maintain a certain number of soldiers (for which they used to draw big sums). Actually they kept a far less number than that. At the time of inspection or *levee* a good many bogus soldiers were hired and set up. By this dangerous artifice Mansabdars faced the trials all right. The task of reforming such a system was stupendous and its exact parallel cannot be met with. Akbar made a personal supervision of the whole matter and introduced many far-reaching reforms which saved for the time-being at least the tottering Mughal military system. His enormous credit lies in the fact that with such an essentially weak superstructure he worked miracles. A regular system of registers containing details about every individual soldier was enforced. He very strenuously pressed for it. Henceforth payment was made direct from the Government treasury. The practice of branding every horse checked cavalry abuses. Akbar also maintained an elephantry. Artillery also helped him henceforth in his battles and sieges.

(c) *Revenue*.—Akbar's revenue reforms were no less noted than his army reconstruction. There had been a repeated outcry on the part of the Indian peasantry from a long time for unjust taxation. Akbar tried his best to remove fiscal grievances. A regular survey of

land was carried on. Lands were differentiated into three classes according to fertility. Average produce of each class was also taken into account and taxation was adjusted accordingly. It satisfied all parties concerned. The subjects henceforth came to have lesser grounds of objections, and dissatisfaction was on the wane. The Government gained because it got a possibility of a definite, fixed income. The Mughal Exchequer which was in a deplorable state on the accession of Akbar now recouped a good deal. Perhaps this isolated cause, namely, an ordered finance contributed most to the success of Akbar's governmental schemes. The British Exchequer when Elizabeth ascended the throne was also in a tottering condition and the Queen showed much tact in recovering it. But Charles V was in a quite different position as we have already said. Yet he had to mourn his unsuccess during his solitary days in the monastery of Sans Juste!

(d) *Provincial Administration*.—Now let us look into the administrator's arrangements of provincial Government. Akbar showed his rare ability as an organiser by evolving an efficient machinery of Government by Subas. The different state officials had their respective, distinct, allotted works. Local self-government was instituted in many parts of the land and the huge structure was set on running on the principle of division of labour. Villages were left to themselves in most cases. The provinces of Emperor Charles V (viz., the Netherlands) were hotbeds of rebellion and discontent. The situation became much more desperate and deplorable in the reign of his successor Philip II.

Extent of Territory: Its Difficulty.—Next let us consider the question of territorial area of different governments. Physical geography has ever put some obstacles on the rulers of the world. Charles V's dominions were severed from one another by great distances. The central authority could not consequently be felt equally over every part. Communication was definitely difficult in those days. So he had to combat great disadvantages with his scattered lands. It must be admitted however to his eternal credit that so long as Charles V lived he did maintain his scattered dominions as a compact unit. Akbar was not spared from similar difficulties. He had to tackle such a vast land like India but he was equal to the task. Had there been a less able man at the helm of affairs he would have lost his equipoise at the disquieting, loud cries of revolt from different parts of the great land. Akbar had sufficient strength of mind to hold on and remain unmoved. At times it was also incumbent upon him to adopt necessary strong actions. He was always up and doing, altogether very prompt for all that. After lapse

of years finally, it was his privilege to see every dissentient voice silenced.

Territorial Consolidation: Ultimate success or failure.—Statesmen may also be examined from the point of view of their ultimate success or failure. The best opportunity to study this is to examine their own death-bed pronouncements (if any). One becomes at that supreme moment one's own witness, own judge. Therefrom we become acquainted with their own respective mental feeling on their past careers. Akbar knew (as we know quite well) before he breathed his last that his work of consolidating the Indian Empire was excellently performed and he died a *happy death*. And that was a prerogative granted only to the few. Among English rulers we may mention Henry VIII and Elizabeth who were quite successful in this respect. The Emperor Charles V had to face an ultimate failure as also his son. Philip II was far from successful. Francis I of France helped a good deal in the extension of the French frontier. None of his sixteenth century successors (Henry IV should be considered properly as belonging to the next century) had the satisfaction of seeing a fully pacified and consolidated France. Solyman undoubtedly must be counted as a great builder of Modern Turkey. Although in his later years he had to face reverses yet he did much for his country. Ivan, the Terrible, extended the Russian frontier and in that sense certainly furthered the territorial consolidation of his country. We also know very well that it is not every ruler's privilege to see fruition before their final exit from the world-stage. But here we are more precisely concerned with the mental feeling of sovereigns in asserting and claiming a just pride over their share of intense labours in helping or setting their kingdoms on to the forward-movement of greater progress and brighter achievements. When passing judgment on different rulers from this stand-point we must not forget that there are statesmen who are really *successful* and worth our adoration amidst all their apparent failures. This point of view is not absolutely infallible and has its pitfalls.

Conceptions of noble Ideals Honesty about means.—Now, let us consider statesmen in their aspect of great conceptions and the capability of realizing them in actuality. In this role the statesman's political garb falls off and he wears the mantle of a prophet. He is able to have a vivid picture of the future in imagination. The statesman becomes an idealist. The Great Mughal, Akbar, presents altogether an admirable picture when viewed thus. Unique among all and unlike all previous Muslim rulers he wanted to turn the extra-Indian mental outlook of his countrymen towards the

land of their adoption by creating a net-work of abiding, permanent interest that would hold them up here. Students of history having sufficient historical imagination very often can see Akbar on beautiful moonlit nights in his magnificent palace at Fatepur Sikri after state-business,—sitting all alone in silence rapt in his vision of a United, India,—when all the jarring elements have been pacified—silenced, and unity brought about,—when the yawning gulf between the rulers and the ruled has been made up! Elizabeth may be said to be equally great; she too had visions of a united and glorious England, raised to an honoured eminence above all continental powers. The other rulers had visions, their cherished ideals each in his own way. Rulers like Philip wanted to see the supremacy of a particular faith, sovereigns like Solyman cherished the extension of Turkish influence on Europe.

But then comes the question of practicality, of achievements—the respective means adopted by each to actualise their dreams. When compared with Akbar in this respect most of them pale into insignificance. To most like Charles V, his son, or Francis I *aggression merely* was the watchword. The palliating, soothing and unifying measures which succeed strong military actions demonstrate full well that the latter were a mere means for realising something higher. Although Akbar had to fight, yet in his long career he has shown satisfactorily that really speaking the sword did nothing for him or at most merely the spawwork. Conciliation and moral influence, the air of impartiality and equal treatment, the message of hope and toleration—all these really did win the Empire for him. In matters of faith he wanted to follow the path chalked out by Nanak, Dadu, Kabir and other prophets. Like them he also wanted to amicably unify all. In the language of figures Indian Islam's body merely so long was lying in this land but the face of its inner mind was always turned towards Mecca, Medina, Samarkand, Bagdad and Khiva with many a fond dream. The Great Akbar was extraordinarily ambitious in one way. He was almost heroic. He for the first time as a ruler attempted the as yet untried task of giving it a newer turn towards Delhi, Agra and Lucknow. Thus Akbar shone in splendour both as an idealist as well as a practical statesman. His reading of the situation was exceedingly correct. This is evident equally both in his scrupulous attention to big issues as well as small contingencies. Nothing was too petty for his consideration. Let us say again of Akbar as has been remarked of Lord Kitchener, that he had the knack of knowing just the man for the job and the job for the man. This is very excellently illustrated by his allotment of respective provinces to able officers just after conquests. Then again, speaking of practicality

we must not omit to note a distinct point that becomes prominent through all actions of Emperor Akbar. To many of the European contemporary statesmen (specially with Queen Elizabeth) the end justified the means. This Jesuitical doctrine swayed and still sways the political atmosphere supreme. For the realization of this ultimate object they were quite willing to sacrifice every honest principle and high ideal. Some one has nicely said that *expediency* is a dangerous term in politics. Viewed in this colour a vicious success psychology is uppermost in those mental constitutions that have the privilege to control state-machineries. Nothing succeeds like success. In every age, in every land this temperamental affinity is observed in all these people. Romain Rolland has somewhere ecstatically but too truly exclaimed,—“History?—What is History?—The History of Success, the demonstration of the accomplished fact, be it just or unjust.”

Elizabeth “lied, plotted and quibbled.” Although idealism cannot (specially in the political arena) always be maintained, yet if we find two rulers both equally badly situated adopting fair and foul means respectively (from a general, total standpoint) and attaining success, we are bound to bestow more praises on the former. We may *justify* the latter case by the exhaustion of all our historical phraseologies ending with such remarks as “these actions were politically *expedients*.” After all the world is a graduated and a contrasted scale. Of Akbar taken as a totality in contrast with Elizabeth specially, we may say, that he seldom adopted systematic dishonest means. His means were always noble, generally speaking—(cf. Elizabeth’s *Underhand* help to Frenchmen, Scotchmen and Netherlanders). Not that Akbar was wholly devoid of state-duplicities. His achievements fully illustrate the message of Edmund Burke that “Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom and a great Empire and little minds go ill together.” To a fallen enemy, as we have said, Akbar was always magnanimous. This feature of his character raised him very high in men’s estimation. To them sometimes the *Master of Delhi* was the *Master of the World*,—extremely generous. “*Dillisvaro ba Jagadisvaroba*”—became almost a very sacred *mantram* in men’s lips. The atmosphere was surcharged with its reverberation. It was almost a catchword repeated by the distant village ploughman plodding through his open fields and the city carpenter too in his closed, stuffed, workshop-cells. For this was no mean a laurel to be won by a king from his subjects,—perhaps it is the highest testimonial that has ever flowed spontaneously from the heart-spring of a subject race! It was out and out a piece of genuine, natural outburst and not *extracted* at the point of fire-arms.

A historian of Elizabeth has written,—“Her policy was not noble nor magnanimous, but with an impoverished kingdom, a ruined navy, a feeble army and an insecure position, *noble policy was impossible*” (Creighton). But we think that by his own example Akbar has proved just the opposite and his greatness definitely lies here. Akbar's difficulties were none the less in magnitude than those here enumerated by the learned author, yet he showed that inspite of them, *noble policy was possible*.

Cultural aspects.—Let us now look at statesmen as patrons of Art and Literature. Many of these personalities created in their respective realms an atmosphere of intense intellectuality—a really high cultural *regime*. Akbar and Elizabeth were equally noble in this respect. This is not the place to enumerate details. Both the ages of Akbar and Elizabeth were glorious from artistic and sculptural points of view. The Elizabethan Age in English Literature is a famous age. It is a history of rare, brilliant achievements. It produced men who transcend their own age and are for all ages. Shakespeare, the uncrowned king of the realm of Elizabethan genius, is a name to conjure with. He has won for himself an abiding place in universal mind.

Akbar's reign produced *literateures* like Faizi, musicians like Tansen, artists like Abdas Samed, architectural monuments like the palace at Fatepur Sikri. Henceforth under his encouragement illumination of manuscripts came very much into vogue. Books were multiplied. Several newer modes, methods and tastes in social finery, dress, ornament, gardening, cooking, etc., cropped up. Music, instrumental and vocal, was directed to distinct directions, ways and styles,—made fuller and more perfect. There was peace under a long reign. And these had all their hey-days. A study of these aspects of his reign has ever been a great fascination to us all. Yet the most wonderful thing about Akbar was that he himself could not read or write. Amidst all the multifarious state-activities he found sufficient time to indulge in conversation with the learned society of the age. Solyman, the Magnificent, exceeds all in one unique feature. He was himself well-educated and a brilliant poet too.

Akbar of course, did not encourage discovery of newer lands like Emperor Charles V or send distant expeditions like Queen-Elizabeth. His reign lacks these features.

Finis.—We have one word more before we close. The aim of the present short paper has been to study a topic in its comparative aspect. We have tried to see how Akbar solved the various state-problems in comparison with his contemporary statesmen and the reader is to judge how far we have been successful. Akbar's shortcomings as well as his merits have both been alluded to. We have used the racial

terms *European* or *Asiatic* for the convenience of easier understanding bereft of all sinister implications. (Concluded)

CHITRAKETU*

By Swami Atulananda

Long, long ago, in days of yore, in the country of Surasena, there lived a king, Chitraketu by name. He was a mighty ruler, conqueror of his foes, wealthy beyond compare, learned and of excellent qualities. During his reign—so it is written—there was in all his dominion no theft, no cheating, no murder, no adultery. For this the people knew well, as the king was ever generous and ready to award virtue, he was no less severe in the punishment of crime. And they loved him for his justice.

The king had a loving, faithful wife of great beauty and queenly bearing. Fortune, indeed, had smiled upon this happy pair.

And still! one long shadow lingered across their path—a single misfortune to darken all their happiness. There was no child.

Now it happened one day, that during his wanderings the worshipful sage Angira entered the capital of Surasena and according to the custom of those days the king invited the venerable sage to visit his palace. When Angira arrived, the king rising from his seat, welcomed him with great hospitality, and paid him the homage due to a holy guest. Then when both were comfortably seated and they had exchanged the courtesies of the day the sage observing the cloud of discontent covering the king's brow addressed him thus :

Your majesty, you have acquired great wealth and power; your country is flourishing and your subjects are prosperous and happy. Still, your mind seems filled with anxiety. Is there still some desire that you have not attained? It seems you are not as satisfied as one in your position might be.

Thus questioned, the king replied respectfully, "O illustrious sir! all things are known to you. But as you have asked me to unfold the cause of my anxiety I freely reveal it to you. With all my prosperity I am not happy, for I am childless. Who will inherit my wealth when I pass from here? Who will protect my subjects when I am gone? As an army without a leader thus is a nation without a king. Enemies will take possession of the land and the people will suffer oppression. My life and labor will have been in vain if at my demise no legal successor mounts the throne. To one of

*Adapted from the "Srimad Bhagavatam."

your austerity, holiness and goodness, all things are possible. O mighty lord, bless me with an heir who may succeed me on the throne."

Angira touched by the sorrow of the noble king, and realizing that his earnest desire was justifiable, sat silent in thoughtful mood. At last he replied, "Oh king! I have considered your request. It will not be as you hope. But you will have a son. That son, however, will be to you a cause of sorrow as well as of happiness. Let the queen live in abstinence for three days, worshipping the gods. Let her subsist on water and fruits only."

Having spoken thus Angira rose from his seat and left the court. Then, with prescribed rites and ceremonies, he performed a great sacrifice, and he prepared a sacred dish the secret of which was known to him. Now when three days had passed and the food had been duly offered to the God of Fire he gave it to the queen to eat. In due time a son was born, and there was great rejoicing in the kingdom. In the capital triumphant arches were erected festooned with flowers; banners were raised; flags unfurled. The roads were sprinkled with scented water, public festivals were arranged and music and song filled the air. And at the palace numerous guests were entertained. Brahmins performed special ceremonies and blessed the new-born babe, and the king rewarded them with gold and silver and precious gems. And great wealth was distributed among the poor. Naturally the parents doted on the child. And this new blessing tightened the cords of love between the king and the queen.

Now, there lived at the court a woman who, as time went on, considered herself neglected by the royal pair after the child had been born. She became jealous, and this jealousy increased as the boy growing in loveliness, more and more absorbed the affection of his parents. At last unable to bear this any longer, the woman secretly administered poison to the child.

One day the queen entered her little son's apartment to feed him. But thinking that the child was soundly sleeping, she went away. However, after some time thinking that he had now slept long enough she told the nurse to awaken her son, and bring him to her.

Accordingly the nurse went to bring the boy. But when she lifted him in her arms the child did not awaken. Then a sudden fear came over her, and placing the boy on his bed again, she ran for the queen. The queen came trembling, thinking that the child might be ill. But when she touched the little body the truth sprang upon her. The boy was dead!

The king being informed, staggered towards his son's apartment, and seeing the dead body he sank weeping to his knees beside the

queen. The mother, bending over the prostrate little body sobbed and wailed, "O my darling, do not forsake your mother, look at the grief of your father. O, sleep no more, wake up my child. Smile once at your mother. You are not dead! It is not possible! O God! is there no justice, no mercy! Why do the old live and my baby dies?"

The sad news spread quickly through the kingdom, and so it reached the ears of the sage Angira. He, accompanied by another sage, Narada, hastened to the palace to console the bereaved parents.

Finding the king almost senseless with grief, Angira spoke, "O king, does it become you thus to give way to sorrow? You are a man well versed in sacred lore. You believe in a Supreme Being who regulates the events of this universe. Trust in God who knows no injustice. All things happen according to sacred law. When I first came to you I wished to instil in you divine knowledge. But finding you interested in other things I granted your desire for a son: Now, O king, alas! you experience the distress of those who lose a child. Death is inevitable in every family. Life is fleeting, death swallows all. Friends and relatives, husband, wife and child, wealth, your kingdom, nay even this earth will pass away. Thus all life is beset with sorrow. Therefore put your mind at peace by meditating Him who is eternal, who knows no change and no decay. He is your own soul, the soul of all existence. Realizing Him you will enter into the realm of tranquillity."

Sadly, with downcast eyes, the king replied, "Oh greatest of sages, I have listened to your words. What you have told me is true, but my heart is set on my boy. After long years of prayer this child at last was granted me to gladden my heart. Without my son I cannot live. Day and night I shall be thinking of him. I shall know no peace. Better that I die this moment and follow my boy to regions unknown." Having spoken thus the king broke out in tears, his head bent, his body shaking.

Then the sage Narada seeing the king still dejected, in great compassion of heart invoked the departed spirit and when the spirit appeared called out, "Behold your son! O king!" and the king looking up, beheld an effulgent spirit.

Then Narada addressing the spirit spoke, "O spirit, see here your father and your mother, sorely afflicted with grief for your departure. I grant you the power to re-enter your body and to revive it. Enjoy a long life with your parents if you choose, and being in course of time installed on the throne enjoy a prosperous kingdom."

But the spirit spoke, "What shall I do with life, I, who have known freedom from the bondage of body. Does the bird freed from the cage wish to enter it again? Bodily existence is a delusion caused by ignorance. That ignorance is destroyed by true knowledge, the knowledge that the soul is divine and forever free. One who realizes his divine nature is delivered from bondage; he rises beyond birth and death, and enjoys eternal peace.

"O father! O mother! many parents have I had in previous births. Fostered by them in helpless youth, each time I became greatly attached to them, and they to me. Where now are those parents? Where is my attachment to them? You also have lived many times in the past. You have had sons and daughters in those previous existences. You have rejoiced at their birth, and you have lamented at their demise even as now you lament at separation from me. The past is forgotten; all has vanished like a dream. Even so this life will soon belong to the past and will be forgotten. As prayer beads are strung on a thread, thus these lives are strung on the passage of time. As stage actors change their parts, so we act different parts in succeeding births. Birth is followed by death and death is followed by new birth. Grieve not then for the unavoidable. Worship Him who is the cause of all causes, and realizing Him live happily.

"This misfortune that has befallen you is but an angel in disguise. Dear parents, having no son to worship now, your hearts will turn towards God, and realizing Him you will attain the supreme object of life. To teach you this I was born as your son."

Having uttered these words of wisdom, the spirit departed.

The parents greatly consoled had the dead body buried and having duly performed the last rites, freed from the fetters of attachment, the source of all sorrow, found solace in a holy life, and the Almighty Hari, pleased with their devotion, when they left this world, granted them that emancipation which is the end of all sorrow and the fountain-head of all bliss.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

APPRECIATION OF EASTERN CULTURE IN THE WEST

One of the most distinguishing features of the modern era is the great facilities for communication and transport that the advancement of science has afforded and the consequent linking up of the destinies of nations separated by thousands of miles of land and sea. The nations of the East and the West and the cultures they represent have been brought into closer contact than ever before in world's history, and a mutual exchange and assimilation of ideas have been going on for over a century. This new state of affairs has in the beginning

been largely due to the enterprise and initiative of the Western nations, and coming as they did into the East for purposes of exploitations and conquest, they were prone to regard the Eastern races and their culture as backward and unworthy of imitation. But the East possessing a culture far more ancient and equally virile though not so aggressive as that of the West, did not fail to cast its silent but overpowering fascination on the Western imagination, and even as Greece conquered her conquerors, has been making her influence felt on the trend of modern thought in the West. There is at present in the West an ever-increasing appreciation of Eastern ideals, and the following remarks of 'The Spectator' is a clear indication of the same :—

"The dramas that unfold themselves throughout Asia, where nations are being re-born and philosophies re-considered, are on a scale so vast that they have received insufficient attention in the West. We notice political changes, for they are definite and describable, but changes in the mind of man, more important in their effect upon humanity, are on a scale so vast that they stretch beyond living sight.

"Yet never was the need for sympathy and information between the East and West more urgent than to-day. Eight hundred million people—the greater part of the earth—are in process of reorganisation and readjustment. They have acquired, to a greater or less extent, the weapons and conveniences of the West, but not our traditions. Their own traditions are valuable and indigenous. Many of them have been shaken by the new ideas and are in danger of being forgotten. Before the War, Westernisation was hated alike by the orthodox Hindu and the orthodox Mohammedan. Now that it has come more suddenly and fully than we ever believed possible, the best minds in the East are saying in effect: "If we are to have the West let us have the real thing; let us learn from the scientist and social worker as well as from the demagogue and salesman." And we, on our side, now that the East is becoming disconcertingly like ourselves, begin to wonder whether something will not be lost to world-civilisation, if the countries that were crucibles of thought become centres of industry instead.

"...Perhaps Asia would have been happier working out her own destinies in her own way, the spawning-ground of millions of contented, unlearned people, the nursery of a few Lao Tses, Gautamas, Mahommeds, Hafizes, Babers. It profits nothing to speculate on this. The sands have run. We must turn the hour-glass of a new dispensation. Europe and Asia have come together in a clash.

"...Whatever the awakened East does, whatever new synthesis in art or ethics comes from the meeting of the two civilisations, our path in the West is clear. We are great enough in our own standards to be receptive. We must welcome the philosophies of the East, not as the whole of truth, but as facets of a diamond of which only a very small part has been polished by our scholars.

"...The spiritual riches of Asia are not contained in dead languages from the Greeks and Romans. The creeds and ideals of Asia are living forces to day—men and women are striving for them as we strive for ours.

"What India can teach us in philosophy will certainly leave us more sympathetic towards the outlook of other races towards whom we have assumed great responsibilities. Even if we are not convinced

of the personal value to ourselves of Indian philosophy, that will be an incalculable gain. On the other hand, we may find that the ancient Sanskrit writings, when interpreted by human and not scholastic standards, will give us wider outlook on our own faith and reveal once again the interdependence of all humanity striving towards the light. The Vedas are, in fact, as much the property of the West as the East. For our own profit as much as for the sake of India we should keep alive the flame that was lit in Aryavarta so many centuries ago. From California to Iceland, and from England across Europe to Calcutta, one word is used by the races of mankind to denote kinship. It is 'brother'—a Sanskrit word."

These remarks of the Spectator are significant in two ways. In the first place it reveals the attitude of the broad-minded section of Westerners towards the culture of the East. In the second place it is an eye-opener to our own people, especially to radical reformers who in their zeal for reorganising their people and reinstating their land in the comity of nations consider that the only hope of the East lies in a total demolition of her ancient traditions and imitating the culture and institutions of the West. We have of course to learn and assimilate many things from the West; but what is required more than that for a healthy growth is to preserve intact the spirit and aspirations of our own ideals and devise a new application of them to solve the problems of modern life.

PHYSICAL TRAINING OF WOMEN

We are glad to note that in a physical culture tournament held under the auspices of the Hindu Samaj Sammilan, a batch of girls, trained in athletic feats gave an exhilarating demonstration of lathi, dagger and sword play. This interest which Indian women are now beginning to show in physical culture is one of the happy signs of the day. The health of the mothers of a country is undoubtedly one of the most important factors that contribute to the vigour and vitality of a nation. A sound training of the womenfolk in various branches of physical culture had been a principal concern of educationist in ancient states like Sparta, and it is still so in most countries of modern Europe. In ancient days in various parts of India also women were given training in the use of arms, and the names of noble ladies like Padmini, Durgavati, Chandbibi and Lakshmibai will stand comparison with heroic women of any other part of the world. In modern times too we must produce women of similar mould, strong, brave and intrepid, and the organisation of physical culture tournaments as the present one will be one of the effective means for doing the same.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Zoroastrian Religion and Customs : By Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha ; published by Messrs. D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Kitab Mahal, Hornby Road, Bombay Price Rs. 3/— ; pages 210.

This is the third edition of Bharucha's book "Zoroastrian Religion and Customs". It gives a clear and lucid statement of the important tenets of this ancient religion and brief descriptions of the various rites and ceremonies observed by the Zoroastrians in their daily life.

The career and date of the Prophet Zoroaster are also briefly dealt with. The author disproves the widely prevailing misconception that Zoroastrian Religion advocates a theory of dualism in which Ahura Mazda (God) is opposed by an equally powerful spirit of evil, Ahriman. He shows that Zoroastrianism is a religion of virile monotheism, admitting the supremacy of no other being except Ahura Mazda. He denies the allegation that Zoroastrians are fire worshippers and interprets many of their socio-religious customs and purificatory rites in the light of hygienic and sanitary laws. The book contains also a short analysis of the Avesta, the Zoroastrian sacred book, and a brief history of the religion in Persia and India. The book is scholarly without at the same time being in any way abstruse and difficult of comprehension. It will be found useful by the Zoroastrians as well as by others who desire to know something authentic and first-hand about this ancient religion.

Wisdom of the Prophets : By Khaja Khan, 69, Jani Jahan Khan Road, Royapettah, Madras. Price Rs. 2/— ; 202 pages.

The present work is a close translation of *Fusus ul-Hikam*, a standard work on *Tasawwuf*, by Shayk Ibn' Arabi, a renowned master of Sufi mysticism and philosophy. The book is divided into 27 chapters, each chapter being named after the particular prophet whose wisdom it seeks to expound. A brief life sketch of the Shayk is also given. The frequent use of technical terms, perhaps unavoidable, will be felt as a formidable difficulty by a casual reader who has no previous grounding in the subject. The valuable glossary explaining the technical terms may, however, go a great way in removing this difficulty. A student of Sufism who has no access to the writings of the Shayk in Arabic will find the book very useful.

Hindu Ethics : By Babu Govinda Das ; published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Price Rs. 2.

'Hindu Ethics' is a searching and critical enquiry into the social and religious problems that confront the Hindus in modern times. The author has ably shown in this volume how the grip of ecclesiastical authority and the putrefying bondage of the dead past over the Hindu society have been the main reasons for its degeneration and decay. In some of the important chapters of the book as Hindu Nationalism, Marriage Laws and Customs, and Personal Law of the Hindus, the author beautifully illustrates how these factors have driven all commonsense from the Hindu mind, and in its place enthroned superstition and slavishness to an extent not only ridiculous but even suicidal. He points out that the popular belief in the inalterable nature of the scriptural texts relating to social life is absolutely unfounded, as they have, as a matter of fact, changed with the progress of time, and, what is more, differ even at present in different parts of the country.

This in short is the purport of the book, and so far as the main outline is concerned few people, with liberal views, will have to say anything against the author's conclusions. But it must be remarked that the author would have done well to devote a fair portion of the book towards constructive suggestions. Of course he has mentioned that right education is the only way for freeing the Indian mind from the thralldom of custom and priesthood. This however is too general a remark ; the author would have done a great service to his country if he had given a detailed scheme of this right sort of education he has in mind. His scheme for effecting a sort of uniformity in the customs,

manners, language, etc., of the Hindus of the different parts of India, and for absorbing the critical and scientific spirit of the West will surely help in the emancipation of the Indian mind. But in our opinion something more is required, and that is a wide dissemination of the spiritual culture of India. To demonstrate practically before the people the sublimity of the true spiritual ideal is the most important and the only constructive method for driving away superstition from their mind, and the unavoidable requisite for this purpose is a band of men in whose lives the truths of the scriptures are exemplified. We do not understand why the author has depreciated the value of Sanskrit in bringing about a renaissance in India. Although we concur with the author in his view that Sanskrit will never become the spoken language of all Hindus, there is no reason why every Hindu, who undergoes a course of liberal education, should not be given facilities for learning that language. As all Hindu scriptures are written in that language, a working knowledge of it will be highly useful in acquiring a real knowledge of the Hindu Shastras which in itself is a very effective way of combating superstition in the minds of men. However, we recommend the book to the public and wish it a wide circulation.

Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy : By Swami Bodhanda, President, Vedanta Society, 34, West 71st Street, New York.

This book of which one chapter on Hindu women had already been reprinted in the Vedanta Kesari, July 1928, is a collection of a series of lectures delivered by the Swami before the congregation of the Vedanta Society of New York during the season of 1924-25. Speaking, as he does, to an audience unfamiliar with the metaphysical subtleties of the Vedanta the Swami has made his exposition as simple and lucid as it possibly could be done. It deals with important Vedantic scriptures like the Gita and the Upanishads; and the Hindu view of Karma, of immortality, of practical spirituality, of devotion, etc., are ably discussed in it. As a book for popularising the principles of Vedanta it will be found highly useful.

Young India Vol. II : By Mahatma Gandhi ; published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. Pages 1352. Price Rs. 4.

This book is an exhaustive collection of the writings of Mahatma Gandhi in his journal, the Young India, from the year 1924 to 1926. The articles are not arranged in a wholly chronological order, but are sorted and grouped under suggestive headings, so as to facilitate the study of particular subjects, and, within these sections, they are arranged exactly as they appeared in Young India. The headings are as follows : —(1) National Unity, (2) Non-co operation, Congress and Swaraj, (3) Constructive Programme, (4) Satyagraha and Non-violence, (5) Miscellaneous (6) Some obiter Dicta.

This attempt on the editor's part to compile the writings of the Mahatma in a systematic form is sure to result in immense benefit to all who are interested in Indian national life. Herein do we get a most vivid account of India's struggle for unity and freedom in the course of these three years, not marred by the monotony of a historian's narrative, but rendered radiant and bright with all the fervour and enthusiasm of a prophet and a patriot. It contains a complete scheme, as evolved by one of the master-minds of this land, for the political and economic amelioration of India. The creed of non-violence which forms the basis of Gandhiji's ethical and religious

teachings is expounded on rational lines, and many a knotty problem relating to Hindu society and religion is elaborately discussed and wholesome conclusions are arrived at.

We do not, however, say that all the views of Mahatmaji will meet with universal approval. Economists might differ from the opinion that the Charka is the panacea for the problem of India's poverty; politicians may consider that to swear by passive resistance in political matters may not always be wise; and men versed in Hindu scriptures might disagree with his views regarding non-violence. For, the practice of non-violence, except as the result of the realisation of the fundamental unity of life, is not considered to be of great value by many important Hindu scriptures. Bhagavad Gita, which is one of the most authoritative texts on Hindu religion, and on which a lengthy article with regard to this very point appears in this book, is an illustration in point. More abstinence from animal diet, which forms the whole of Ahimsa in popular opinion, and which according to Gandhiji forms an important part, though not the whole of it, is the result of an abiding influence of Buddhist and Jain faiths on Hindu religion. Even on Gandhiji's authority the entire avoidance of Himsa is an impossibility, and as such a man who does a little of Himsa in the matter of food need not on that account be regarded as a loathsome or degraded creature. It is not abstinence from meat or otherwise that determines a man's fitness for salvation, and hence it should not be given as it is done nowadays, such an undue importance in the moral code of the Hindus. There is, however, no gainsaying the fact that a large section of India's population is strictly vegetarian, and advocates Ahimsa, and for them this aspect of Gandhiji's teaching will stand as a guidance and inspiration. These differences of opinion, inevitable in their nature, do not in any way mar the usefulness of the book as a whole. A politician or a statesman will find in it plenty of matter for guidance; a moralist or a truth seeker will find in it much spiritual food; and the succeeding generations of India will turn to it for an inspiring treatise on their country's struggle for national freedom. Undoubtedly it is a classic of Indian national literature.

(i) **On Genius (in English). Price As. 3 only.**

(ii) **Garland of Ramakrishna Homa-mantram (Sanskrit mantram in Bengali character). Price As. 4 only. By Svami Nirlepananda, Saradananda Kutir, Khatra, Bankura, Bengal.**

(i) In this booklet of 22 pages the Svami speaks of the characteristics that distinguish a man of genius from the ordinary run of mankind. In his opinion genius is not the outcome of industry alone, but the result of the intervention of an unknown factor which is manifested in the super-man in the shape of an intense self-belief that exerts an irresistible influence on all who come into contact with him. He has profusely illustrated his ideas by examples from history. The book though small in size is illuminating and scholarly and written in a style that is both lucid and forceful.

(ii) This booklet, as the title signifies, contains a graphic account of the ritualistic procedure to be followed in the performance of Homa in the sacred name of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. One hundred and eight mantrams in Sanskrit composed by the author himself with a literal Bengali rendering thereof have been appended at the end.

The brochure is interspersed with some choice sayings of Sri Ramakrishna Dasa and Swami Vivekananda and is enriched with a few beautiful songs of the writer himself. The contents are highly instructive and their perusal never fails to rouse devotional feelings in the heart. We wish it a wide circulation.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SIVANANDA VIDYALAYA, CEYLON

The Ramakrishna Mission, Ceylon, has started a new English School named 'the Sivananda Vidyalyam' in the village of Kallady-Uppodai near the Batticaloa town. The opening ceremony was performed on the 25th of April, 1928, by Mr. Harrison-Jones, the Government Agent. The proceedings began with prayer and a speech by Swami Avinashananda. In the course of the speech the Swami said that the institution has been named after the revered President of the Mission, His Holiness Sri Sri Sivanandaji Maharaj. He emphasised on the harmony of religions which forms the central point of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings as well as one of the main objects of the Mission started under his name. He also referred to Swami Vivekananda's scheme of man-making education which he assured the audience would be the earnest endeavour of the school authorities to follow. He finally appealed to all present, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian, to consider the school as their own and co-operate with the authorities in making it a success. The Government Agent then declared the school open by cutting a ribbon with a pair of scissors, and delivered a speech appreciating the educational activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. He said that he had realised how great the strength and progress of the Ramakrishna Mission was in Ceylon, and what good work it had done in the large towns of Jaffna, Batticaloa and Trincomalee. He had been told that the Mission had been working for less than 4 years, and within that short period it had established many schools, that being the 3rd English School, and there were also many Vernacular schools in the field. It was a great thing that owing to the generosity of two excellent headmen, *viz.*, the late Messrs. Kathiramtamby Udayar and Sabapathy Udayar whom many of them remembered, and whom unfortunately he came to Batticaloa too late to know of, it had been possible to begin the school in time. It was owing to them and to their relatives who took a great interest, and others, that the school was going to be a great blessing to the teeming population, if he might say so of that area. To the children it would mean that their parents who contributed to it had been making a great sacrifice. He was glad to hear that, to begin with, there were a hundred, or more than a hundred, children likely to attend that school. He was sure that the education imparted by the Mission would be of high quality. He would like them to bear in mind, in this connexion, the famous saying of the founder of that Mission—"Knowledge is Unity, Ignorance is Diversity." In conclusion he pointed out that although people thought that knowledge made people restless, true knowledge always brought about love, and hatred proceeded from ignorance of others. He hoped that true knowledge would teach their boys and girls social and religious tolerance. This was followed by a short speech in Tamil by Swami Vipulananda. With a vote of thanks

to the Government Agent, proposed by Mr. J. T. Thambyrajah, the proceedings terminated.

ACTIVITIES OF THE R. K. ASHRAMA, RAJKOT

Under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot the 94th birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 28th and 29th April. On the 28th before a large gathering, under the presidentship of Mr. D. B. Sukla, Bar-at-Law, addresses were delivered on the life and teachings of the Great Master. In his opening speech in English, the President dwelt upon the various aims and activities of the Ashrama, particularly on the spirit of service and the gospel of toleration. The President's speech was translated in Gujarati by Mr. H. D. Raval. Swami Visvananda, the President of the Khar Ashrama, Bombay, was the principal speaker of the day. In a most eloquent speech delivered *extempore* in English, he spoke on the universal teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Mr. H. N. Pandya explained in Gujarati the principal points in the Swamiji's address. Mr. A. N. Baxi, B. Sc., L.L.B., spoke at length in Gujarati on the various incidents in the life of Sri Ramakrishna referring particularly to his doctrine of the universality of all religions. The proceedings then terminated with a song by Manjula Bon Mehta, Lady Superintendent, Barton Female Training College. On this occasion on the 29th about 600 poor people were fed in the Ashrama premises. The Ashrama further celebrated with due solemnity the Ramnavami on Thursday the 18th of April as well as the Hanuman Jayanti on the 23rd April last at the Ashrama premises. Many devotees took part in the functions.

Swami Visvanandaji, President of the R. K. Ashram, Bombay, visited Rajkot in May and stayed in the Ashrama there for about a month. He delivered five lectures at Rajkot on (i) the need of toleration, (ii) the place of religion in national life, (iii) Bhakti, (iv) the path to God-realisation as taught in the Gita in Hindi and (v) the life of Sankaracharya on the occasion of his birthday. He delivered three lectures at Porbander. He returned to Bombay on the 26th of May. The Rajkot Ashrama celebrated the Buddha Jayanti on the Vaishaka Purnima. In the Ashrama premises a beautiful picture of Buddha adorned with flowers was kept on a decorated platform. A large number of people, men and women, gathered at 6-30 P.M., and Swami Nishkamananda delivered an impressive lecture on Lord Buddha and his teachings.

Mr. Jayanti Lal, M.A., a Professor of the Rajkumar College, spoke in Gujarati. The meeting ended with the distribution of Prasadam.

THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, POONA

Under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society, Poona, the 94th birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was celebrated on the 17th March, 1929, at the Sardar Moodaliar Club, Rasthas Peth. After some preliminary religious ceremonies were performed, there was Bhajan, lasting till about 9-30 A.M., in which several local Bhajan Melas had joined and in course of which a number of Abhangas and other songs in praise of God were sung, which were much appreciated by the audience.

After this, there were three religious sermons delivered by Mr. S. N. Karnatki, Professor Dandekar and Swami Visvananda. Aratrik and distribution of Prasadam terminated the proceedings. In the evening on the same day at 6 P.M. Swami Visvananda

delivered a most eloquent lecture on "Bhakti" in course of which he spoke on several forms of Bhakti illustrating his remarks by citing incidents in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The Swamiji's lecture was greatly appreciated.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN BUDDHA AT THE DACCA R. K. MISSION

The birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Buddha was celebrated with due solemnity on Thursday, the 23rd May, 1929, in the Dacca Ramakrishna Mission premises at about 5-30 P.M. A portrait of Lord Buddha was tastefully decorated on a dais erected for the occasion. An atmosphere of serenity prevailed over the whole ground and charmed the audience till the close of the day.

A meeting was held under the presidentship of Babu Bhavani Prasad Neogi, M.A., Retired Deputy Magistrate, to discuss the life and teachings of Buddha. There was a fairly large attendance of respectable ladies and gentlemen. The function began with an opening song. The chapter on "Vikshu Bagga" from the "Dhammapada" with a translation in Bengali verso and prose was read by a Brahmachari of Ramakrishna Math. Professor Radha Govinda Basak, M.A., read a very nice paper in which he explained lucidly the doctrine of work and its secret—Karma as propounded by the Great Buddha, and pointed out its difference with Hindu doctrine of "Karma." Professor Sudhendu Kumar Das, M.A., Ph.D., also read a learned paper in which he dwelt on the cultural atmosphere of India at the time of Buddha's advent and on the philosophical doctrines of Buddhism. Babu Nalinikanta Bhattacharya, M.A., Curator, Dacca Museum spoke very feelingly on Buddha's birth, cycle of religion and his routine of daily life. Referring to Prof. Rysdavid's valuable American lectures on Buddhism, he pointed out the necessity on the part of the children of the soil, of studying the life, teachings and movement of Buddhism as a whole, in India.

Prof. Umesh Chandra Battacharya, M.A. B.L., in the course of his very interesting speech paid homage to Lord Buddha and very nicely dilated on Buddha's personality and his contribution to religion and culture all the world over, specially with reference to the following points: an excellent organisation of a regular monastic Order probably imitated later on by the founders of the Christian Churches in the middle ages in Europe, the Doctrines of Karma, Ahimsa, Universal Brotherhood and Non-violence. He drew a beautiful parallel between the glorious work done by the Buddhist monks and the invaluable work done by the monks of medieval Europe in the cause of suffering and ignorant humanity. Babu Manmatha Nath Roy, M.A. B.L., Munsiff, paid his homage to the Great Master by reading a poem of his own on the glories of Buddha. The President then said that the Great Buddha could not rightly be called an atheist, a non-believer in God only because he kept silent on God. He was rather worshipped as a God by his disciples and followers immediately after his Nirvan and is still being worshipped by the Hindus as an Avatar. The President remarked that the doctrine of Karma was not first preached by Lord Buddha as the Gita had propounded clearly the principle of work and its secret even before Buddha. The meeting terminated late in the evening with a song on Buddha specially composed for the occasion by Babu Phani Bhusan Mitra. The function which was on the whole an eminent success, closed with the distribution of Prasadam.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MYLAPORE,
MADRAS

Although the branch of the R. K. Mission in Madras has been doing a good deal of religious, educational and temporary relief work ever since its inception, it was only in September, 1925, that it started its first permanent philanthropic work in Madras in the shape of the charitable dispensary at Mylapore. The first report of this dispensary, recently published, dealing with its work from 1925 to 1928 shows that its presence in this part of the city is in no way superfluous ; for the number and the nature of cases treated in those few years show a phenomenal increase and great variety respectively. In the first year the total number of cases treated was 970, in 1926 it was 5,109, in 1927 it rose to 9,414 and in 1928 it came to 18,222. It is to be noted that the number of patients is daily on the increase and that it is attracting patients even from such distant places as Saidapet and Royapuram where hospitals and out-door dispensaries are already in existence.

To meet this increasing work the dispensary requires more money and public support. The following are its most urgent needs : (1) A Pucca Dispensary Building—It is at present situated in a small thatched building which is found insufficient to accommodate the staff and the patients. So it is proposed to raise a pucca building at an estimated cost of Rs. 10,000. Anyone wishing to perpetuate the memory of his or her dear relation or friend can do so by contributing the amount required for erecting one or more rooms or the whole building. (2) A General Fund—The dispensary is at present managed by an honorary doctor assisted by a Swami whose whole time is spent in looking after the dispensary. At present the expenditure for medicines and the maintenance of a whole-time worker comes to Rs. 60 per month. To meet the growing demand on service more funds, workers and medicines are required. (3) Up-to-date Modern Appliances and Outfits—Many patients have to be denied service for want of appliances. This want has to be remedied for rendering the work more efficient. We hope the generous public would come forward with liberal contributions to support this philanthropic cause and place the institution on a sound financial footing. Contributions may be sent to Swami Yatiswarananda, President, R. K. Math, Mylapore, Madras.

R. K. MISSION RELIEF WORK IN BENGAL

During the recent famine in Bengal the Ramakrishna Mission conducted relief work on an extensive scale in the districts of Bankura and Dinajpur from May to November, 1928. In Bankura district there were 4 relief centres operating in 127 villages and affording relief to 5,618 persons while in Dinajpur 3 centres helped 3,852 persons in 139 villages. In Bankura medical aid was given to 1,700 patients suffering from malaria. As donations for relief, were received 229 Mds. 28 Srs. 14 Ch. of rice, 1,597 pieces of new cloth, 15½ bundles of old cloth, 12 new towels, 130 banians, 24 bottles of Edward's Tonic and 36 phials of germoline. On the whole the receipts amounted to Rs. 28,600 in cash and kind, and Rs. 24,700 were spent from the seven centres.

Owing to an outbreak of fire in the village of Ramakrishnapur (24 parganas) 40 families were rendered homeless and destitute. A sum of Rs. 100 was spent from the Provident Relief Fund of the

Mission through its branch centre at Sarisha which purchased building materials with the amount and distributed the same among 19 homeless families.

R. K. MISSION FIRE RELIEF WORK, MADRAS

On account of fire in July, 1928, in Kosapet, Mylapore, Madras, 195 huts were burnt and 952 persons rendered homeless. The R. K. Mission undertook the relief of the distressed. As the fire had consumed all their belongings, the homeless people were fed for three days in the morning, and cash doles given for evening meals. After investigation 65 men and 89 women were found to be in need of cloths, and they were supplied with the same without delay at a cost of Rs. 282-6-0. People who had been injured on account of the fire, and weavers whose looms had been destroyed were either rendered relief or provided with labour until they were in a position to look after themselves. For housing the distressed the Mission obtained a piece of Government land from the Collector of Madras, and plots for huts were allotted among 93 families, and housing materials to the value of Rs. 640 4 3 distributed among them free of cost. The new colony planned in consultation with the Town Planning Expert is provided with broad and well-levelled streets, and looks quite neat and sanitary. The receipts from public contributions amounted to Rs. 2,335-6-4 of which Rs. 1,155-8-5 were spent, thus leaving a balance of Rs. 179-11-11.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF IN ASSAM AND BURMA

In Assam though the water has subsided in many places, the sufferings of the people continue to be the same. Many people are still living under the open sky exposed to the rain and the sun and huddled together on high streets or by the side of hills. The preliminary relief necessary on such occasions has been given. Next we shall have to distribute rice and undertake the work of hut-building for the more needy till the situation improves. Cases of cholera, small-pox, etc., are visible in many places and we have to administer also medical relief. In some places cattle are dying of starvation and fodder also is very difficult to procure. In Cachar we have taken up 2 Perganas—Bikrampur and Jatrapur covering an area of 58 square miles. The place being inaccessible, work has been here all the more difficult. A new area near Silchar extending over 6 square miles and consisting of 10 villages has required help from us. In Karimgunj we have begun work with Bhangarpur as the centre. Here we are giving help to 2790 recipients belonging to 655 families in an area of 30 square miles. In Naogaon we are working with 'Kshetri' as the centre. In Akyab we are giving relief to 1515 recipients belonging to 620 families in an area of 20 villages. Prompt action being very urgently necessary in times of flood, we request all to rise equal to the occasion.

All contributions sent to either of the following will be thankfully received and acknowledged :—

1. The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P. O., Howrah Dt.
2. The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 182A Muktaram Babu Street, Calcutta.

Sd. SUDDHANANDA,

Secretary, R. K. Mission.

10-7-29,

AN APPEAL FOR SRI SRI MATRIMANDIR, JAIRAMBATI,

Jairambati, a village in the district of Bankura, is the birth-place of the Holy Mother, the consort of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Dev, the world teacher who came to demonstrate the harmony of all religions. In this village was erected in the year 1330 B.S. a magnificent temple on the site where the Holy Mother was born. The temple has been named "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Math Matrimandir" where daily worship, annual festivals, including the feeding of Daridranarayans are being regularly held. Jairambati is only three miles distant from the birth-place of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Dev. In this poor and notoriously malarious place, a charitable dispensary and a free primary school have been established by the Ramakrishna Math. At present these are located in a hovel which is unfit for human habitation. Pilgrims from all parts of India eagerly come here to visit this sacred place and the Matrimandir. But unfortunately, in the absence of any suitable resting house these visitors have to undergo great hardship and inconvenience in the inclemency of the rains and storm and winter and summer. Sometimes the inconvenience and difficulty happen to be so great that the workers in the Matrimandir find themselves in great embarrassment. Many of the public who are eye-witnesses of these hardships have openly expressed their concern at the want of a proper rest-house. Mr. Guru Sadaya Dutt, I.C.S., late Magistrate and Collector of Bankura, showed practical sympathy by clearing the surrounding jungles and arranging for the purchase of additional lands for the temple. The District Board of Bankura is removing a long-felt want by constructing a road up to the temple. We now approach the public with the beggar's bowl for providing the aforesaid requirements. We hope all will help us in our noble mission and will thereby earn the blessings of the Lord. At least Rs. 30,000 will be needed for erecting a Dharamsala (rest-house) with an attached library, a charitable dispensary, a free school and adoption of measures for making the place healthy by driving out malaria. All subscriptions and donations for this philanthropic work will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Ramakrishna Math, Matrimandir. If so desired, any one may construct a building in his or her own name or in memory of a relative and dedicate it for the noble purpose.

We gratefully acknowledge with thanks the following help received by us:—

- (1) Rs. 10 a month from the District Board of Bankura.
- (2) Rs. 10 a month from Sj. N. Sundar Raja Ayengar, Assistant Commissioner, Bangalore.
- (3) Free supply of medicines (Malarino tablets, Laxin tablet and Pyrex) during malaria by B. C. P. W.
- (4) Free and plentiful supply of Edward's Tonic from Messrs. B. K. Paul and Co.
- (5) Free supply of the Homeopathy monthly journal and occasionally free supply of Homeopathy medicines from Sj. Profulla Ch. Bhur, Calcutta.
- (6) Supply of Homeopathy medicines at half-price by Messrs. M. Bhattacharyya & Co.

All help should be sent to Swami Parameswarananda, Secretary, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Math, Matrimandir, Jairambati, P. O. Desra, District Bankura.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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[No. 5

PRAYER

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दुर्न्तस्यानादेरपरिहरणीयस्य महतो
निहीनाच्चागेऽहं वृषशुग्भस्याऽस्पदमपि ।
दयासिन्धो ! बन्धो ! निरवधिकवात्सल्यजलधे !
तव स्मारंस्मारं गुणगणमितीच्छामि गतभीः ।
पिता त्वं माता त्वं दयिततनयस्त्वं प्रियसुह-
र्त्तमेव त्वं मित्रं गुरुगसि गतिश्चासि जगताम् ।
त्वदीयस्त्वदभृत्यस्तव परिजनस्त्वद्गतिरहं
प्रपन्नश्चैवं सत्यहमपि तवैवास्मि हि भरः ।

Devoid of *Acharas* and therefore like a beast in human form, I am the very seat of inexpressible and endless sins of insuperable nature ; O My Beloved One, the Ocean of Mercy and of unending love, I desire to be fearless by constantly contemplating on Thy holy attributes.

Thou art the father, the mother, the husband and the son ; Thou art the dear friend, the relative, the teacher and the only support of the universe. Being Thine own,—a servant and attendant without anything except Thee in view—I have taken refuge in Thy feet, and my burden therefore wholly rests on Thee, My Lord.

YAMUNACHARYA

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

I

It was the third day of the dark fortnight of Ashara, Sunday, the 22nd July 1883. Sri Ramakrishna after his mid-day rest was seated on his cot, facing towards the north. The devotees were gazing at the blissful countenance of the Master. At a little distance the sacred Ganges was flowing southwards with its rapid course, as if eager to meet the sea. On the way it tarried, as it were, only for a while to have a glance at the holy sanctum of the great sage. Adhar, Rakhal and Mani had come from Calcutta to visit the Master. Mani Mallick, an old Brahmo devotee of 65 years of age who had recently been to Benares on a pilgrimage, was also seated in the room along with other devotees.

Mani Mallick while narrating his experiences at Benares said, "I met another Sadhu there. He said that without the control of the senses no progress was possible. Simply, taking the name of the Lord was of no avail."

Sri Ramakrishna : Do you know their creed ? They hold that one must practise austerities and acquire *Sama, Dama and Titiksha* at the outset. Their object is to attain Nirvana. They are Vedantins : hence they constantly think that Brahman is real and Jagat is unreal. But it is a very difficult path after all. If Jagat be unreal, you also are unreal, and he who speaks is likewise unreal and his words are necessarily as unsubstantial as dreams.

"Do you know what it is like ? It is like camphor : when burnt it leaves nothing behind. On the other hand when wood is burnt, at least some ashes are left. Samadhi is attained only when discrimination ends and in that ecstatic state no knowledge of 'I', 'Thou', 'Jagat', etc., persists."

[The Master's interview with Padmalochan]

Sri Ramakrishna : Padmalochan was the court-pandit of the Maharajah of Burdwan. He was a great scholar, and when he came to Calcutta I felt a strong desire to see him. Coming to know through Hriday (the nephew of the Master) that in spite of his profound scholarship he had no egotism in him, I met him one day. He began to weep when he heard me sing songs of

Ramaprasad ! And though I took the name of the 'Mother' he respected me much ! Nowhere did I feel so much of satisfaction and pleasure as I did there. He asked me to give up the desire of enjoying the company of the devotees ; otherwise the wicked people would drag me down from the height of my spiritual life. He further said that in a certain meeting there was a heated discussion as to the relative claims of superiority between Shiva and Brahma. Finally, the Brahmin pandits referred the matter to him. The latter was so simple and straightforward that he at once said that his fourteen generations had seen neither Shiva nor Brahma.

" There was a certain pandit who was very proud and would not admit the Personal aspect of God. But strange are the ways of Providence : The Lord appeared before him in the form of Primal Shakti. The pandit remained unconscious for a long time and when he became partially conscious he began crying repeating 'ka', 'ka', (i.e., Kali)."

[The Master speaks about the charity of Vidyasagar]

A Devotee : You have seen Vidyasagar. How did you like him, sir ?

Sri Ramakrishna : Vidyasagar is learned and charitable : but he has no insight. If he had the knowledge of the gold mine lying hidden inside, his outward activities would have grown less till at last the whole activity would have ceased to exist. Had he known the Lord dwelling in the heart, he would have remained absorbed in His meditation alone. To some the doing of selfless work ultimately brings dispassion, and thereafter the mind is turned towards God and becomes firmly devoted to Him.

"The kind of work Vidyasagar is doing is very noble. Kindness is good, and it is quite different from attachment which produces evil. Attachment is the same as deep affection for wife, children, brother, sister, nephew, niece, parents and the like, whereas kindness means universal love for all alike."

II

[Brahman is beyond the three gunas]

M. : Is kindness also a bondage ?

Sri Ramakrishna : It is so, but quite in a different sense. Compassion arises out of the Sattva guna which maintains the

universe, whereas the Rajas creates it and the Tamas destroys it. But Brahman is beyond all the three gunas—beyond Prakriti.

“The gunas like thieves in the story cannot reach the Truth. The thieves cannot go straight to the place of treasure for fear of detection. The three gunas are all thieves. I shall tell you a story:

“A man while going through a forest was surrounded by three dacoits. He was robbed of all his possessions. One of the robbers wishing to do away with the man rushed at him with sword in hand. Whereupon the second robber interceded and said, ‘Well, friend, it availeth us nothing to kill the man. It is better to leave him bound hand and foot.’ So they did and went their way. A little while after the third robber returned to the spot and said to the man, ‘Are you hurt? Come, I shall set you free.’ So saying he loosened his bonds and asked him to follow him as he intended to show him the main road. After walking some distance when they got to the main road the robber said, ‘Go by this way and you will reach your home that stands visible at a distance.’ The man said to the robber, ‘Sir, you have done me a great service. Be pleased to come to my house.’ The robber said in reply that he could not go so far as the police might apprehend him.

“This world is like a forest. And the three gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—are but the three robbers dwelling in it; they rob man of his right knowledge. Tamas tends to spell his ruin, Rajas binds him down to Samsara; whereas Sattva saves him from the clutches of Rajas and Tamas. With the help of Sattva one gets rid of lust, anger, etc., begotten of Tamas and Rajas, and it is Sattva that frees the Jiva from the bondage of Samsara. But Sattva also, is a robber and cannot bring in the right knowledge; yet it shows him the high road leading to the supreme Abode and points out the Home from a distance; for Sattva is far removed from Brahmajnanam.

“Brahman cannot be expressed in words. He who realises It cannot describe It. There is a saying that ships never return from ‘black waters’ (deep sea).

“Once, four friends in course of their wanderings came near a place surrounded by a high wall. All of them were very anxious to know what was inside. One of them managed to get

upon it and was wonder-struck at what greeted his eyes. So great was his joy that he instantly jumped in and did not return to tell his experience. Thus whoever got upon the wall immediately jumped inside with joyous ejaculations and there was none left to bring back the news of what happened there."

[Jada Bharat—Dattatreya—Sukadeva]

Sri Ramakrishna: Jada Bharat and Dattatreya were all knowers of Brahman and could not unfold their experience after realisation. Egoism is wiped off altogether in the state of Samadhi attained after illumination. So, Ramaprasad has sung, 'If thou, O mind, fail to succeed alone, take Ramaprasad in Thy company.' The mind must be annihilated and along with Ramaprasad, *i.e.*, egoism, too. Then alone will come the knowledge of Brahman.

A Devotee: Sir, had not Sukadeva real knowledge?

Sri Ramakrishna: Some hold that Sukadeva only saw and touched the Ocean of Brahman: he did not dive deep into It. So it was that he could teach the world so much after his return from Samadhi. Some others, again, hold that after the realisation of Brahman he came back for the good of mankind. The Lord did not wipe away his egoism completely as He desired that he should narrate the Bhagavatam to king Parikshit and perform many other deeds for the well-being of humanity.

[Instruction to Keshab—Sectarianism is not good]

Devotee: Is it possible to maintain sects after the knowledge of Brahman?

Sri Ramakrishna: I had a talk with Keshab about Brahmajnanam. He pressed to hear more about it; but I said that further enlightenment on the subject would prove a death blow to his sect. Keshab therefore did not ask me to proceed any further (all laugh). Still I told Keshab that the idea of 'I and mine,'—that 'I am the master' and 'This wife, children, property, name, prestige, etc., are all mine'—arises out of ignorance. I asked him to give up the lower ego that says, 'I am the master; this is my wife; this is my son; I am the teacher' and told him to be established on the higher ego that says, 'I am His servant; I am His devotee, I am not the master; He only is the Master.'

[The religious teacher must have the command from on High]

Devotee: Can the higher ego form any sect?

Sri Ramakrishna : I told Keshab that the idea that 'I am the leader, I myself have created it and I am teaching mankind'—all belonged to the lower ego. It is not possible to prerach a creed without the sanction from the Lord. Sukadeva received such a command to narrate the Bhagavatam. If a person obtains the sanction after realisation he only can preach religion and teach people, and there is no harm in it. For the realised soul retains only the higher ego.

[Keshab admits the Primal Shakti]

Sri Ramakrishna : I told Keshab that Brahman and Shakti are not different—they are one and the same. The idea of duality persists so long as the body-consciousness exists. Differentiation is unavoidable when It is attempted to be expressed in words. Keshab admitted Kali (Shakti).

"Keshab once came here with his followers. I expressed a desire to hear his lecture. He therefore delivered a speech in the open space near the bathing ghat. After the lecture was over, I had a long talk with him there. I asked him to repeat—'Bhagavat—Bhakta—Bhagavan', for He who is the Lord is the Bhakta (devotee) and the Bhagavatam (the holy scripture). Keshab and his followers did it but when asked to repeat 'Guru—Krishna—Vaishnava', he refused to do so lest he should be called a fanatic by his people!"

[The play of Maya]

Sri Ramakrishna : To transcend the three gunas is very difficult. It is not possible until the Lord is realised. The Jiva lives in the domain of Maya. Hence it does not allow him to know the Lord. This Maya has kept man in delusion. Hriday once brought a young calf, and one day I found it tied in the field for grazing. I asked him why he had kept it tied there. He said, 'Uncle, I shall send it to my native place. When grown up it shall be used for the plough.' The moment I heard it I passed into a swoon. What a play of Maya! Calcutta and Kamarpukur are separated by a long distance and the young calf shall have to walk the whole of it! There it will grow up and will at last be used for the plough! This is called Samsara,—this is Maya. It is after a long time that I regained my consciousness.

THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL INDIA—II

It has already been pointed out how the subtle process of exploitation has depleted India of her economic resources in the recent years. Statistics have also been requisitioned to demonstrate that the India of the present day is nothing but a shadow of what she actually was in the ancient and the mediaeval ages. There has of late been a complete revolution in the rural and economic life of the country. And as a matter of fact, the strongest plank on which the economic life of India was built up has been removed with the advent of the European imperialism. The disappearance of the native Indian courts that absorbed most of the finest industrial products of the land and offered opportunities and support to the guilds for the production of the precious articles, the establishment of an alien Government that opened channels for the influx of many foreign influences that such a change meant, as well as the undue patronage of the foreign industries leaving no scope for healthy competition, contributed mightily to the gradual extinction of the industrial life of India. The indigenous products were ousted from the field as they could not receive the Governmental support to the extent they did in the Hindu and the Mohammedan periods, and as such the home industries could hardly keep pace with the machine-made articles that monopolised the Indian market. The Indians had naturally to give up this unprofitable calling and to fall back upon agricultural pursuits to make the two ends meet with the result that the number of the agriculturists have of late risen abnormally. But even this agricultural pursuit is not now a paying proposition. In India the system of scattered and strip holdings continues, and on average a farmer has barely 2·2 acres, *i. e.*, 6 to 7 bigas of land to cling to as a means of support in life. Naturally 'many hands concentrated upon one small holding make light work, but many bellies waiting to be filled from its produce make light meals.' To crown all, illiteracy of the land has added to the hopelessness of the situation. It is a curious phenomenon that even after the British administration of a century and a half India cannot count more than 5·2 per-cent of her population as literate though England and America have to their credit more than 93·5 and 95·4 percent of their population respectively in the list of literate persons. These startling figures disclose the real India of to-day, and the nation-builders would do well, in all their schemes for national uplift, to come down from their terraced heights to peep into the interplay of the disintegrating forces that are sapping the very foundation of our life. India lives in the village, and if any national well-being is sought to be promoted in

the land, the constructive work must be begun from the bottom of the scale. To mobilise the scattered forces of Indian life and to harness them to the task of rebuilding our village life is the desideratum of the present day. The villages have become the veritable dens of jackals and hyaenas, a creeping paralysis has already begun to spread over every limb of our rural system and millions of people are dying every year of manifold diseases. To talk of political or spiritual salvation without a practicable scheme for the organisation of the rural life of India is nothing short of rabid ideology moriting the contemptuous pity of all self-respecting peoples.

The problem that stands before us today is in one sense the problem not merely of India but of the whole world. The underlying principle that has been governing the relations between Capitalism and Labour, Imperialism and Democracy is, with a slight variation, in operation almost everywhere. There has already been a wide gulf between the educated classes and the illiterate masses, between the rich and the pauper. In order that India may not be the playground of the bloody and disruptive forces, the leaders of Indian thought must accommodate themselves to the philosophy of equitable distribution of rights and privileges and stretch out a hand of love and sympathy to those on whose labour they are fattening for ages without the least qualm of conscience. The limited few living in silent seclusion in the stifling atmosphere of towns and cities are but sponging upon the resources of the cultivating classes and in return dozing away the precious hours of their life in the opium-eaters' paradise. May we ask what tangible steps have up till now been taken to solve the outstanding economic problems of the country? Is it not quite up to the leaders (not to speak of the benign Government) to marshal all the forces to open and offer wider facilities to the mute millions of the land for their all-round growth as well as for the efficient training of their intelligence? Ignorance in most cases is the root of all evils, and the foremost task before the national workers is to fight such illiteracy boldly and squarely. The situation has been rendered complicated by the interaction of the conflicting interests of the different classes and it can be stated with certitude that unless there is a surrender and sacrifice of vested interests at the altar of national well-being, no amount of frothy sentimentalism shall be able to compass the freedom of the bleeding proletariat. In the words of Mr. Stein, the celebrated German statesman, we can also say : "If the nation is to be uplifted, the submerged part must be given liberty, independence, *property* and protection of the laws." And in view of the existing order of things in the country, the only solution that can be offered to this tangled

problem lies in the giving of more lands to the peasants and in the opening of further facilities for industrial development. Every student of economics must admit that without a stringent law of minimum holding, the slow process of diminution of the size of each holding can never be arrested in the country. There are provinces in India where vast expanses of virgin lands still lie uncultivated. An approximate estimate of cultivable waste land in different provinces shows that Assam has 15 million acres, Burma 60 million acres, C. P. 14 million acres, Punjab 10 million acres, U. P. 15 million acres and Bengal about 6 million acres of cultivable waste. These can most profitably be utilised by a distribution of population over them. Dire economic necessity has driven many a nation in the West to make such experiments. Any one who has some acquaintance with the recent developments in the economic life of Russia must have observed how within a few years of the revolution the villages have been organised into economic units, and every such unit can now boast of up-to-date appliances for cultivation. The cultivable waste lands of Caucasia, Siberia, etc., are being utilised for the economic development of the country and the people have now got 22—23 bighas of land per head for cultivation.

While dealing with this problem we must as well pay our attention to the volume of output per unit of input in agriculture as well as to the increased variety and improved quality of the products of agriculture and also to the maintenance of soil fertility and natural resources. This presupposes sufficient capital, more leisure and sound training of the farmers in agricultural technique and also a greater degree of stability in rural life. Scientific manuring or farming is quite unknown to our people. Professor Mullik of the Chinsura Agricultural Institute points out that the situation, however hopeless it may be, can be effectively controlled by an adoption of irrigation system on an extensive scale in parts where it is a dire necessity, by teaching agriculture in village schools and industry in town schools, offering more credit facilities and starting a net-work of co-operative organisations throughout the length and breadth of the country. In short opportunities must be created and the capacity of the peasants to seize such opportunities must as well be developed through effective training. Along with these, there must be improved means of locomotion, the spread of agricultural industries and larger expenditure on the part of the central authority towards that end. Many even fail to understand that there is an intimate connection between agricultural progress and educational reform. The idea that elementary education should develop the capacity for facing the problem of life intelligently and with determination has not yet been acted on on a very large scale

in India. The present system of education is to a great extent responsible for the helpless condition of India to-day. Even the young men of the land, when highly educated, fail to have that synthetic understanding of the intimate relation between the ideal and the real as well as between their individual aspiration and the general good of a collective life. An educated Indian is, in many cases, nothing short of an Anglicised polyglot or an idle visionary having no solid ground of practical training to stand upon. So does Mahatmaji say: "If all education means a general discontent with one's surroundings, a wrench with the past without hope for the future and a general scramble for employment, the whole of the beautiful edifice must one fine morning come down with a sudden crash. Without the culture of the heart and the hand more growth of literacy has no attraction for me. What is wanted, therefore, is a drastic measure giving not an indifferent manual training, but a proper *occupational training*, specially designed to make it worth while for educated men not to look up to Government service.....Unless the mind of the student world is given a bent in the direction of the main and natural sources of livelihood and is developed in a scientific spirit in keeping with the special Indian condition, the gulf between the educated classes and the masses must widen; the former must live on the latter instead of the former living with and for the latter and sweetening their life."

Another vital problem that confronts us today is how to adjust our rural life to the process of industrialisation that is going on in the country. It is a noteworthy fact that the villages without an industrial town near by have in recent years been in a very miserable condition. We cannot at this stage be blind to the forces of industrialism that are working phenomenal changes in the economic life of the world. The gradual extinction of the home industry has presented a serious problem before us. There is a school of thought that holds brief for cottage industries as the only means of economic salvation under all circumstances and negate the possibilities of *healthy* industrial development of the country by means of Occidental factory-processes. We have more often than not pointed out that in the readjustment of our organic life it would be a sheer suicide to taboo altogether the Western methods and systems. In spite of manifold evils inherent in such processes, the industrialisation of the country on a factory basis cannot *absolutely* be resisted when it has already begun to work and make its usefulness felt in every centre of our economic activity. *What is wanted is not rejection or rejection but an assimilation, and an adjustment of our corporate life to the system with an adequate safeguard against the evils inherent in it.* Every system has its good as well as evil aspects and India has

already gathered sufficient experience in the working of this system and a knowledge of its merits and drawbacks. And it is now a self-evident truth that India must, sooner or later, run the process if she is to make a bid for material efficiency in this world of competition. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the present Premier of Great Britain, does not seem to be wrong in his weighty observation in *The Awakening of India*: "In face of the industrial developments which one sees in Calcutta and Bombay, will hand industry survive at all? It is based on agriculture, because it depends mainly on the village market..... At the present moment 70 per cent of the people of India depend more or less upon agriculture for a living. The percentage will diminish, but it will do so gradually; so that, with some assistance from public opinion and technical education, handicraftsman can exist for a long time, though in diminishing numbers, alongside factory industry. His greatest menace is the increasing cost of living, which will raise his cost of production, whilst factory industry in India has yet broad margin for effecting economy.... The hand loom worker must depend ultimately upon the cheapness of his products and the taste of purchasers. If one or other fails him he will have to become an agricultural labourer or drift into the factories, and, in either case, become one of the proletariat. This struggle between factory and handloom is a grim battle and practically every Western influence is behind the factory! Moreover, it is the economic source of not a little political unrest." We cannot indeed ignore the force of his argument when the effect of industrialisation of other powerful countries of the East is taken into consideration. Not to speak of Japan, even China and modern Turkey have in recent years come out triumphantly through this industrial process. We are only waiting to see a successful experiment of the system in India as well. But it must not at the same time be forgotten that until the process is adopted to the extent it suits our conditions of life, hand industry must stand as an alternative pursuit to fill the idle hours of our agricultural classes. There is a big section of Indian population who have no other alternative but to fall back upon this home-industry for eking out their living in life. The importance of hand industry as an alternative employment in our economic life cannot therefore be ignored.

The rural life was never so well-organised as it was in the Hindu and the Mohammedan periods. Every village was a self-contained unit having its own educational institutions, councils, boards, guilds and the like. It was in short a State in miniature. But the modern life of rural India is quite disorganised and tells a woeful tale of rank illiteracy, destitution, scarcity

and insanitation;—in fact, it has become a veritable hotbed of diseases and superstitions. Still, we are being daily told by the powers that be that there has been of late a remarkable progress in every department of India's corporate existence. Needless to say that the criteria of progress differ among different races according to the difference in their outlook on life. So far as India is concerned, her rural progress is to be measured by the amount of satisfaction the members of the farm family derive from their occupation as well as by the amount of facility they enjoy for self-expression. For, mere external status is not a reliable index of intrinsic welfare. "Progress," as Professor Cooley has said, "like human life in every aspect, is eventually tentative; it is a process rather than an attainment. The best is for ever indefinable; it is growth, renewal, onwardness, hope." So as a matter of fact progress must be judged by its approximation to certain ideals based upon collective social usefulness. We are too much inclined to measure progress in terms of mechanical conveniences whereas these conveniences are merely new tools and in practice are quite as frequently used for destroying quality of life as for enhancing it. The rural progress is reflected in the social and economic growth of the people, and the rural life like every other type of life has a twofold function: It serves its own people and makes its contribution to the social whole. Naturally, therefore, the subjective and idealistic values of rural life are of far greater importance than all the objective and money profits. A healthy rural life must express itself not merely in the economic greatness of the people but also in their moral soundness. The latent aspirations for a higher idealism must therefore be stimulated among the people and the spiritual outlook must ever be widened so as to prevent our corporate life from degenerating into a mere run for sordid material well-being.

The country needs an organised band of practical idealists who must come out from their cloistered seclusion to face the grim realities of India's rural life. The age-long political prostration coupled with a woeful lack of adequate attention to the problems of rural India has created an atmosphere of moral apathy towards every kind of healthy adventure. The interest of the peasantry of the land can no longer be kept in the background. Napoleon emancipated the peasants and in consequence for twenty years they helped him to conquer Europe. Needless to say that India's salvation must come through the emancipation of the peasantry and the creation of village-life into healthy centre of organised activity. Economically India is on the verge of ruin and if prompt measures are not taken to organise the villages on a sound economic basis suited to the temper and

genius of the people, the extinction of the race is a foregone conclusion. The masses must be made self-conscious and trained to keep pace with the march of our corporate activity ; for it is on the conscious and intelligent life of rural India that the edifice of our future greatness can ever be built. The interests of the vast bulk of Indian population have so long been trampled under foot. But they have now grown conscious of the grave dangers that hang over their devoted heads. It is a psychological truth that men only realise how dearly they hold to their heart the cherished ideals of life when they are threatened or visited by some overwhelming calamity. France was summoned to defend not only the soil of the fatherland but the precious conquests of the Revolution. And the history bears an eloquent testimony to how the bold peasantry of the land shed their blood for the safeguard of their interests as well as for the honour of their motherland. When blood began to flow and the achievements of the Revolution were imperilled, the French people turned into a community of super-men whose volcanic energy scattered the hosts of feudal Europe like chaff before the wind. The signs of a coming revolution in the existing order of things are clearly visible on the horizon of Indian life, and there is already a stir and commotion in the country to cut down the fetters that have kept the people bound for ages. The wars of freedom both economic and political are being fought on every side and this struggle has tintured the imagination of the down-trodden masses of India with the glow of a new idealism and served to enkindle the latent fire in them for the achievement of the long-lost freedom. For, the joy of freedom is the common heritage of man, and when it is denied to him under the dominion of alien forces, the soul of humanity rises in righteous revolt and attempts to break into smithereens all the manacles of life. The neglected and much abused section of the Indian population has suffered untold persecution and humiliation at the hands of the privileged few without even a word of protest on their lips. But times have changed and the cry of the oppressed humanity shall no longer go unheard. In spite of all efforts to put them down, the mute millions of India must reassert themselves and take their proper place in the corporate activity of the nation. The call has already reached the ears of the great Indian Leviathan and there are unmistakable signs of awakening from the slumber of ages. It is time that they should be brought out from the home of darkness to the full glare of a life of culture and emancipation and allowed the freedom of action in the nation's struggle for liberation. The country wants them, for their claims can no more take the denial from their masters. Loud comes the voice from on High :

Wake up, O ye abased of yore! stand on the glory of your strength,
 " This day break through your ruined huts, and come forth!
 Pierce through the darkness of rock and forest and come forth!
 Men of the Earth, Men of the Earth, awake ye all this day;
 Shiva's horn calls you loud at your door, be ready ye all!
 Ye that have cleared forests and built towns, awake ye all!
 Ye that have made the desert green with crops, awake ye all!
 Come, ye vast mass of the Abased of yore, ye Heroes of work,
 Hold your heads high in the sun-rise of this new Dawn.
 Men of the Earth, men of the Earth, awake ye all today,
 Siva's horn blasts forth its call loud at your door, be ready ye
 all."

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN INDIAN HISTORY

By Swami Ghanananda

I

Gleanings from the pages of history

We are living at a time in the history of India when almost all the efforts of the intelligentsia of the country are being put forth for its advancement on political and economical, commercial and industrial lines, and for raising it thereby to its rightful place in the comity of nations. And one may rightly ask: "Why should we give a place to religion in a programme of our social and national life? What good did it do in the past—what was its role?"

Passing through the long, long corridors of time,—leaving behind epoch after epoch and age after age,—and stepping almost beyond the incomplete mansion of historic thought and archaeological research, we come face to face with the ancient Aryans who were joyous, happy, virile and forceful. They were the greatest race that ever lived and carved a glorious and wonderful culture and civilisation. They possessed three marvellous gifts—the gift of reason, the gift of emotion and the gift of intuition. Their intellect—sharp like a sword—enabled them to cleave through nature, probe into her secrets and discover both the experimental and the exact sciences. They were thus able to give astronomy, physics, chemistry, medicine, algebra, geometry and trigonometry to the world. In the domain of psychology, metaphysics and philosophy, they were beyond all compare. They also wrote treatises on polity, law and grammar. Their rich and exuberant emotion expressed itself not merely in the melody of music but also in the melody of colour. It wrought poetry not only

in verse and prose but also in silver and gold, marble and tapestry. And whatever they attempted, they did with system and method, and a sense of thoroughness and perfection bespeaking ages of intellectual and artistic evolution.

All the great nations of the world have possessed the gifts of intellect and heart in a great degree, but what made the ancient Aryans greater than the rest was the blending of these gifts with the gift of the gods—the faculty of intuition or introspection. They were joyous birds of beautiful plumage flying in the empyrean of life with reason as one wing, emotion as another, and intuition as the rudder. It is no wonder that such a race could produce the Upanishads. It is no marvel that it could leave a lasting impress on our thought and life, which could not be effaced by the impact of the surges of time.

The preponderating spiritual element in the Aryan race led its reason into the realm of the super-rational and its artistic instinct into the region of the super-sensuous. It is this element that has given a distinctive stamp to India and her people, and has contributed to making religion the basic foundation of her life as well as the ultimate goal of all her endeavours. That religion has been the secret of India's inexhaustible and death-defying vitality—the great and precious *Jeevamrita* (lit. nectar of life) which has helped her to triumph over time and change—will be evident from a study of several lessons from the pages of India's past.

II

The strangest phenomenon in the world's history

The first and foremost lesson that strikes the student of Indian history is that India has been alive in spite of invasion and political subjection for nearly the last one thousand years. Phœnicia, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and other nations rose and fell in the past leaving behind them mere names, or at best relics of their culture and civilisation, which interest only the historian or engage the archaeologist only. Greece and Rome were once powerful empires, but they are now no more as distinct nations of the world. Greece still speaks to the cultured world through the voice of modern Europe, and Rome has bequeathed to civilised man her sense of law and order. Yet the fair blossom of Greek art and literature can grow no more; and where the Caesars had ruled the spider weaves its web to-day. But India has been alive from time immemorial, and as she has lived on for scores of centuries in the past, we may well be justified in foreseeing that she will continue to live in the future, nay that this Punyabhumi or Holy Land of ours—this Aryavarta of our ancients—can never die. Here, therefore, is the strangest phenomenon in the world's history—a nation which has been alive for several thousands of years, which has

stood all internal and external shocks, which still retains her culture and civilisation, whose soul is still vital, the like of which there is none except perhaps China.

Reasons for India's perennial life

How can we account for this wonderful phenomenon? In the first place, India is a vast peninsula—almost a continent—with teeming millions, and no foreigner could conquer and administer the country as a whole at any time, excepting the British. The aliens usually conquered the north-west, north and north-east as well as portions of Central India but could hardly penetrate far into the South. And even in the case of British conquest, the English could not gain possession of the whole land until after the middle of the nineteenth century. So, during the years of political subjection, there were many parts of India which were independent and could live the normal life of the land with its culture and civilisation, its arts, crafts and trade. And when peace and order were established in the conquered regions, and they acknowledged the supremacy of the new masters, they sprang to their feet again, regained the vigour of their national life and began to assimilate the new-comers by their culture and civilisation. The internal life—the *Soul* of India—was thus left untouched by the conquerors. The subjects paid the taxes and owed allegiance to the new government which carried on the administration of the subjugated territories. But India remained her own old self and this is the significance of one of the sayings prevalent in the land—more before the advent of the British as the rule by them has resulted in its economic drain and consequent impoverishment,—“what matters it to us if Rama rules or Ravana reigns?” Even to-day, the millions of peasants in the country might repeat the same saying but also add, “Yes, but what we want is enough of nourishing food to eat our full meal and enough also to fully cover our nakedness.” The Persians, Greeks, Pathans and Moghuls—all came and conquered but they not only failed to engraft their culture and traditions on India but, on the other hand, also recognised and admitted the superiority of the of Indian culture.* Even in the matters of administration the conquerors did not introduce anything new in general plan or minor detail, for they mostly found that the country had its own administrative system and social polity well-developed. The village remained the unit of local self-government even under the new rulers and this contributed more than anything else to the security of the structure of India's national life. Speaking of the village communities of the past in India, Sir Charles Metcalfe says: “The village

Cf. Piny, Strabo, Megasthenes, Herodotus, Porphyry and other writers.

communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Mughal, Mahratta, Sikh, English and all become masters in turn, but the village communities remain the same.....This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence."

Moreover, agriculture, the main occupation of the country, did not suffer in ancient times. India was able not only to supply her own needs, but also to export the surplus products to other lands. Nor was she lacking in industrial arts, as one can see from the testimony of ancient historians.

Besides these, India's Varnashrama Dharma or socio-religious polity which was conceived by the ancient Rishis and thinkers who not only ministered to the spiritual and cultural welfare of the people but also laid down laws for a sound and harmonious working of the different parts of the social organism with an ulterior spiritual motive in view, was a very sound system. As this was followed with devotion by the people, the solidarity of each *commune* was kept up. Varnashrama Dharma consisted of duties (Dharma) of the Varna as well as duties of the Ashrama (stage or division of a man's life).

According to the Varna Dharma, the Brahmana kept the torch of spiritual and intellectual culture burning, not only by study but also by practice and teaching; the Kshatriya protected the country from foreign invasion and preserved law and order within; the Vaisya tended to the work of commerce, agriculture and industry, and remained the financial prop and source of prosperity; and the Sudra contributed his own humble but valuable quota to the general well-being by his service to the other Varnas or castes. The spiritual motive of each division or caste consisted in the attainment of liberation by illumination through the process of self-purification resulting from the carrying out of its respective Dharma. When the system of Varnashrama was working well, this motive permeated it and as grease to the machinery, contributed to its harmonious operation by replacing the aggressive and selfish idea of rights and privileges, individual or collective, by the ideal of duties and responsibilities.

The Ashrama Dharma was an ideal scheme of duties (Dharma) in the different Ashramas or stages of a man's life. In the first stage

or Brahmacharya, he lived the life of a celibate-student in the hermitage of a well-known Rishi. Here he studied the arts, literature, religion, philosophy—in brief everything that made a liberal education, including, perhaps, the natural sciences and mechanics as well—and received the best form of physical, intellectual and moral culture available in any age. In the second stage or Garhastya, he married and lived a householder's life, became a prop of the social structure, and discharged his duties to the community in a spirit of service and self-discipline. In the stage of Vanaprastha which came next in order, he retired to a Tapovana or hermitage to live a life of virtue and spirituality, teaching, if possible, the Brahmacharins or students as in the hermitages where he himself had received his education. In the last stage, according to the ideal of the scheme of Ashrama Dharma, he was expected to take Sannyasa or embrace the monastic life and spend the rest of his life in contemplation and meditation.

Both the Varna Dharma (scheme of duties for the four castes) and the Ashrama Dharma (scheme of duties for the four stages of life) were ideal schemes. They were working fairly well in the best and brightest periods of Indian history, and have left behind them a tradition which is living even to-day. But there were times when both the schemes of Varna Dharma and Ashrama Dharma received rude shocks from within and from outside India. The foreign conquests disturbed them whenever aliens tried to subjugate the country. There were also mutual jealousy and rivalries between the Kshatriyas and Brahmanas and between the cultured and the masses. Thus in the Vedic age, when the Brahmanas advocated the performance of rituals and ceremonials as enjoined in the Karma Kanda of the Vedas, impelled partly by the dictates of their conscience and partly by economic necessity, the Kshatriyas arose and preached the Jnana Kanda or philosophy of the Upanishads. Besides intellectual vigour and spiritual strength, the Kshatriyas possessed military prowess and valour and were therefore able to make themselves felt in society. Their right royal arm kept down the priestly class; but pride of power brought in degeneration as well. The Brahmana's conflict with the Kshatriyas, as given in the Pauranic episode of Parasuram's wars, dealt probably a heavy blow to the latter's power. This was partly emasculated also by Buddhism which preached non-violence and gentle compassion to one and all, and gave practically no place to the soldier in its scheme of religion. For these and several other reasons, the Kshatriya element in India had become considerably weakened long before the advent into the country of its first conquerors. This decline of the strength and power of the military class was one of the main reasons for India's political downfall and subjugation by foreigners.

Just as the Varna Dharma was forgotten, so also was the Ashrama Dharma, with the passing of time. Even the Brahmanas who were expected to be the spiritual leaders failed to carry out the injunction laid down for them for observance in the different stages of life.

On the whole, however, the Varnashrama Dharma or Socio-religious polity, in spite of the evils that crept into it and the gradual decline that consequently set in, greatly contributed to the maintenance of India's strength and solidarity, despite the inevitable evils of domination by an alien power.

Above all, there was something in the Indian race and culture which slowly and silently contributed to the well-being and internal strength of India in a manner which is unparalleled in the history of any other nation. A social polity, however well-conceived and soundly planned it may be, is sure to become paralysed and finally destroyed under such adverse circumstances, political and otherwise, as have befallen a poor and unhappy country like India. There were sound social systems in other countries as well, but they all terribly crashed under the weight of national misfortunes. In such systems, the distribution of work and other features had been as good as in the Indian polity. They too had contributed to the welfare and prosperity of the countries in which they were working for centuries. But for all that they could not stand the vicissitudes of time: They are now no more. The social polity of India, however, has not become extinct and possibly cannot die. The secret of this lies in the fact that it is based on religion, nay religion is its very life-blood and nurture. When a boy was born in Hindu Society, he found himself within a family, a Varna, a state which had each its own Dharma or duty to do for him. And when he grew up he too had his own Dharma to do, which was as inviolable as the Dharma of the others in whose midst he was growing. It was considered far nobler to die in the performance or attempt at the performance of one's own Dharma than to shirk or backslide or take up another's Dharma. Sri Krishna says in the Gita, the most popular Scripture of the Hindus: "Better is one's own Dharma, (though imperfect), than the Dharma of another well-performed. Better is death in one's own Dharma: the Dharma of another is fraught with fear." The Soul of India has, therefore, been religion or spirituality in the past. It was this that gave her life the vitality and the vigour which nothing else could give her. She has remained through the ages a veritable Queen among the nations of the world, within her own impregnable fortress of which religion is the inner rampart and her socio-religious polity the outer. All the other ramparts are but subsidiary to or branches of the latter. For, the traditions of her culture and civilisation, her village community her

agriculture and industrial arts—all these have been derived from her grand scheme of Varnashrama Dharma. And whenever the outer rampart became weak or needed repair, fresh forces from the inner rampart within which dwelt the Spirit of the nation, her Soul, were sent to strengthen it. Does not India then deserve the name of the most spiritual nation that other peoples call it ?

III

The unrivalled glory of Hinduism

Now we shall pass on to the second lesson that India's past can teach us. It is the wonderful assimilative and expansive power of Hinduism. This power consists in the captivating charm, the spell of fascination possessed by its religious and philosophical truths. No other religion in the world has such catholicity and universal appeal, such breadth and depth as Hinduism. It contains truths which satisfies all minds and all temperaments. It provides the amplest scope for the play of emotion, intellection or volition,—the faculties of feeling, thinking, and willing. Other religions represent but certain phases of this parent of all religions in the world. Christianity, for example, may appeal to the devotional type of man ; but of a philosophical or scientific basis it cannot claim much. This is why such conflicts as those between Fundamentalism and Evolution commonly occur in the West today. Buddhism with its impersonal note and absence of a Personal God may suit an intellectual type of man ; but of the rituals and ceremonies which the man with devotion wants to perform in his worship of God, it gives none. Islam teaches the method of realising Allah or God in His Saguna-Nirakara (formless but with attributes) aspect ; but the worship through images and symbols, pictures and devotional music it has banished. In a similar way, other religions are developments of certain phases of the Truth. They all point out the means and methods of realising the Infinite, but not one of them possesses the universality and all-comprehensiveness of the Vedanta. The most emotional man with his thirst for Personal God (Isvara) whom he wants to worship with fruits and flowers, incense and camphor is welcomed by Hinduism as warmly as the most intellectual man, the scientist, the thinker who wants to reduce every thing in this universe into its ultimate cause by the sledge-hammer blows of logical reasoning. The active man with his heart bleeding for the sufferings of humanity, with a love and compassion which makes him work day and night for the good and well-being of one and all is given as good a place in the bosom of Hinduism as the psychological man who wants to control his body and mind, study the forces operating within, and arrive at the Self,—the foundation and basis of

all existence. From the lowest fetichism to the highest Absolutism all phases and grades of religious thought and development are represented by the Vedanta. It was this all-comprehensiveness and width that was pointed out by Swami Vivekananda when he said at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago: "From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists, the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion." The Vedanta preaches a universal religion and a universal philosophy to, which each creed and church is only "a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances to the same goal.*

It was because Hinduism possessed this synthetic outlook that she was able to welcome in her land the adherents of alien religions who coveted her wealth either by trade or by conquest†.

The fascinating spell of Vedanta

Orientalists like Max Muller and Paul Deussen have borne testimony to the powerful spell that Hinduism exercises on the human mind. Says Victor Cousin, the eminent French philosopher: "When we read of the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East,—above all those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe,—we discover there many a truth, and truths so profound and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East, and to see in the cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy." And Sir Monier Williams declares: "Indeed if I may be allowed the anachronism, the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin; and evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like 'evolution' existed in any language of the world." It was Schopenhauer that paid a glowing tribute to Hinduism when he remarked: "There is no study more beneficial and elevating to mankind than the study of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death." Carlyle and Emerson were both deeply influenced by the Vedanta. It was the captivating charm, the remarkable fascination of the Hindu religion and philosophy that made Thoreau utter: "One wise sentence is worth the State

* Cf. Bhagavad Gita iv II.

† For example, the "Phoenicians of the Biblical times, Arabs, Greeks and Alexandrian Romans, Persians, Abyssinians and other foreigners,"

of Massachusetts many times over." It is no wonder that the truths of Hinduism spread in the cultured world in the past and are still spreading in the cultured world of today.

Hinduism—Its assimilative power

Indian History is replete with examples of the assimilative power of Hinduism from beginning to end. Out of the clash and conflict of races and tribes in the Vedic times the Aryans emerged successful because of the superiority of their religious culture. It was their religion that enabled them to absorb into their fold races after races and tribes after tribes when they poured into India in later times, by giving them all the stamp of the central assimilative core. This process was repeated time and again, and shows how the Sakas, Kushans, Huns, Persians, Bactrians, Parthians, Greeks and Scythians mentioned in history, and Abhiras, Gardabhilas, Sakas, Yavanas, Bahlikas and other outlandish tribes of whom we hear in the Puranas all yielded to the wonderful assimilative power of the Aryan Religion.

When the refining power of the Aryan religion made itself felt and new individuals became attracted to Hinduism, no attempt was made to proselytise them in haste with a view to add more adherents to the fold. It may be asked, then, how the process of assimilation differed from the conversion of non-Christian people by the Christian Missionaries of today. The would be votaries of the Hindu faith were taught as much of the truths of the Hindu religion as they could assimilate and were allowed to worship their own gods and goddesses in their usual manner. For, Hinduism recognises, as no other religion does, that man progresses not from error to truth but from lower truth to truth which is higher. So the worship of their deities by the new comers was not destroyed, but their conceptions of worship and of their gods were slowly sublimated by the uplifting power of Hinduism. They were thus taken, as far as they could travel, in the spiritual realm, and those who were gifted amongst them crossed even high spiritual altitudes without becoming giddy. How different this was from the baptism and christening by the Christian Church! This Hinduisation or Aryanisation was extended not only to groups of individuals but also to large tribes, clans and races.

The individual was not the unit, but the community, † in the Varnashrama system, during and after this Aryanisation. The great benefit of this feature was the elevation and edification of

* Cf. Lily Strickland Anderson's article entitled "In Praise of Heathenism" in the Open Court, 1926.

† Cf. Alfred Lyall's Asiatic Studies.

the whole community by the efforts of individuals, who, however advanced and ahead of their group they might be, lived in their community without leaving it to join another to which they had a claim for admission by virtue of their cultural superiority and moral and spiritual worth. The 'low-caste' Saints of India like Nanda and some of the Alvars of the South and like the Chamar Saints of the north all remained within their own communities, raising the level of their moral and religious culture.

With such assimilation, the fold of Hinduism was expanded, and the religion democratised by the treasures of spiritual thought being thrown broadcast for one and all. This happened even during the Vedic times whenever a community became rigorously exclusive. Thus when the Brahmanas became narrow and retained all spiritual privileges for themselves the Kshatriya leaders and philosophers arose and democratised the religion. At the time of Sri Krishna,—a period during which there were so many creeds and paths in religion and philosophy crying for a harmony and synthesis which was effected by him in the immortal Gita—both spiritual and social equality was preached. He declared to Arjuna: "Even if the very wicked worship Me with devotion to none else, he should be regarded as good, for he has rightly resolved. Soon does he become righteous, and attain to eternal Peace, O son of Kunti; boldly canst thou proclaim that My devotee is never destroyed. For, taking refuge in me, they also, O son of Pritha, who might be of inferior birth,—women Vaishyas, as well as Sudras,—even they attain to the Supreme Goal."

The Brahmanas had the great glory of being the custodians of the spiritual and intellectual treasures of Hinduism. They preserved these treasures not merely by their study but also by the practice and preaching of the truths enshrined in the scriptures, and by living exemplary and ideal lives. In their jealousy to guard the purity of the culture, they, however, became exclusive. This has been the good as well as the evil they have done to India. To some extent it was necessary. What is the use of teaching truths which cannot be appreciated and much less translated into practice by one and all? Thus arose the Adhikaravada in Hinduism, according to which none can be taught, and can claim to receive, a spiritual truth which he cannot understand or assimilate. It is the theory of fitness for instructions. But later it degenerated into a plea for social and religious prerogatives exercised by the members of the Brahmana class who became selfish, narrow-minded and bigoted. To the great glory of Adhikaravada must it be said that it kept the central core of Hinduism pure, untainted, vital and fresh, but to its utter shame must it be added that,

nothing else is more responsible for the downfall and misery of the masses who form the strength of India as they do in other countries.

(To be concluded)

THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By P. C. Bhattacharya, B.A.

Before dealing with the life of Sri Ramakrishna it is necessary to consider briefly the conditions prevailing in India at the time of his advent. Coming in contact with the Occidental civilisation and the missionary activities of the Christian religion, India that had fallen for below from her high idealism during the preceding centuries was no doubt galvanised with new ideas, but unluckily she receded to a great extent from her ancient moorings too. So we find a great leaning towards the Christian religion and foreign culture, disregarding their own, on the part of the Indians during this period. Internecine quarrels were also going on between different sects. It was at this time that the great Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his able successors Maharshi Devandra Nath Tagore, Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen and others tried successfully to stem the tide of the Christian religion and foreign culture with their Brahmo idealism. In this connection we should not forget, however, the services rendered by the Theosophy and the Arya Samaj to the Sanatan Dharma. But at the same time it must be said that all these movements were more or less sectarian in outlook, and could not bring back the Sanatan Dharma to its pristine glory. Hence was the necessity of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna, who, by living the life as he did, showed to the world a grand synthesis, which welded into a homogeneous whole the heterogeneous ideas and ideals of his time and thereby justified the ancient claim of the Santan Dharma or the Eternal Religion by comprehending all the great living religions of the world in its broad bosom.

The many-sidedness of Sri Ramakrishna's personality has been very vividly described in the following words by Mr. Pratap Chandra Najumdar, the well-known Brahmo leader, and a contemporary and eyewitness of Sri Ramakrishna's life :

" My mind is still floating in the luminous atmosphere which that wonderful man diffuses around him whenever and wherever he goes. My mind is not yet disenchanted of the mysterious and indefinable pathos which he pours into it whenever he meets me. What is there in common between him and me ? I, a Europeanised, civilised, self-centred, semi-sceptical, so-called educated reasoner, and he, a

poor, illiterate, unpolished, half idolatrous, friendless Hindu devotee ? Why should I sit long hours to attend to him ; I who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max-Muller, and a whole host of European scholars and divines ? I who am an ardent disciple and follower of Christ, a friend and admirer of liberal minded Christian missionaries and preachers, a devoted adherent and worker of the rationalistic Brahmo Samaj—why should I be spell-bound to hear him ? And it is not I only, but dozens like me who do the same. He has been interviewed and examined by many, crowds pour in to visit and talk with him. Some of our clever intellectual fools have found nothing in him, some of the contemptuous Christian Missionaries would call him an impostor or a self-deluded enthusiast. I have weighed their objections well, and what I write now I write deliberately." Continuing he further says:—"He has nothing extraordinary about him. His religion is his only recommendation. And what is his religion ? It is orthodox Hinduism but Hinduism of a strange type. Ramakrishna Paramahansa (for that is the name of this saint) is the worshipper of no particular Hindu God. He is not a Shaiva, he is not a Sakta, he is not a Vaishnava, he is not a Vedantist ; yet he is *all these*. He worships Shiva, he worships Kali, he worships Rama, he worships Krishna, and is a confirmed advocate of Vedanta doctrines. He accepts all the doctrines, all the embodiments, usages and devotional practices of every religious cult. Each in turn is infallible to him. He is an idolator, yet is a faithful and most devoted meditator of the perfections of the one Formless, Infinite Deity—whom he calls Akhanda Sachhidananda (Indivisible Existence—Knowledge—Bliss). For long days he subjected himself to various disciplines to realize the Mohammedan idea of an all-powerful Allah—His reverence for Christ is deep and genuine. He bows his head at the name of Jesus Christ, honours the doctrines of his Sonship, and we believe he once or twice attended Christian places of worship. These ideas at all events show the catholic religious culture of this great Hindu Saint." These words of Mr. Majumdar eloquently describe the spirit of harmony and synthesis that the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna breathe. In fact in his short life was compressed nearly the whole spiritual history and experience of mankind. Beginning his life as an ignorant worship of images he passed through the various stages of mental worship and meditation until he reached that pinnacle of spiritual experience where the individual casting away all the shackles of name and form finds his identity with the universal soul. With single-minded devotion did he follow the different spiritual practices mentioned by the various sects of Hinduism for the realisation of their respective

ideals. Thus he actually practised the various Sadhanas of the Sakta cult and the various Vaishnava sects as well as of the high metaphysical religion of Advaita and came to the realisation of their ideals in an incredibly short time. He also underwent the disciplines of Islamic religion, and worshipped Josus Christ and had the vision of him. In this way by actually following and not by any intellectual or the so-called eclectic method did he come to the conclusion that the ultimate goal of all religions is the same however different may be the means and methods prescribed by them to their votaries.

Again he reconciled in his simple but convincing way the apparently antagonistic theories of Dualism, qualified Monism and monism and pointed out that all of them were true in their own spheres. According to him a man who is in the lower stage of the spiritual Sadhana cannot rise above dualism. When he has advanced to a great extent, he comes to the stage of qualified Monism. But proceeding further when he comes face to face with the Ultimate Truth, he is convinced of monism. Thus when he realizes that Ultimate Truth he can boldly declare, "I am He," "I am one with the Existence—Knowledge—Bliss, and my very nature is ever free." It is therefore clear that the same Truth is viewed through three different angles of vision in three different stages. These three theories can be fittingly compared to the rungs of a ladder. As each rung of the ladder is indispensable for reaching the roof of a house, so each of these three theories is also absolutely necessary for realizing the Ultimate Truth, which is beyond name and form, specially in view of the fact that this world consists of persons having different natures and placed in different stages of the spiritual development. So there should be no internecine quarrels among the adherents of these theories. In this connection it should be mentioned, as pointed out by the great Swami Vivekananda, that Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhavacharyya, the three greatest exponents of these three theories, did not hesitate to torture the texts of the sastras in order to propound their respective views. But Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated that there was no necessity of torturing the sastric texts because these three theories have been inculcated in the sastras to reach the Ultimate Truth through the three different stages, as indicated above.

In spite of the bold assertion by the vedic seers that there is only One Existence (एकमेवाद्वितीयम्) the Hindus gradually failed to grasp that grand Truth without the help of some symbols. Thus they took to image-worship—for which they were being despised and reproached. So Sri Ramakrishna had to begin his Sadhana through this very image-worship, and he was able to show to the world by his realization that image-worship was no impediment in the

way of realising the Ultimate Truth, if properly performed. His worthy disciple, the Swami Vivekananda also justified image-worship as being suitable and helpful to a great majority of mankind. He further pointed out that it was prevalent in different religions in some form or other, such as the Cross or the Caaba, the Church or the Mosque, the Book or the Image, the Chest and the Dove. Here it is worth quoting the views of that great orientalist Max-Muller who had a high regard for Sri Ramakrishna. Says he: "It is true that the Hindus worship idols. But in the Bhagavat Geeta the Supreme Spirit is introduced.....as saying with sublimest and almost super-divine unselfishness "Even those who worship idols, worship me". Is not this the same thought St. Paul expressed so powerfully at Athens: "whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you", and is not this the spirit in which missionaries might and ought to approach every religion". There is another significant fact in connection with the life of Sri Ramakrishna. The modern people, being puffed up with their scientific knowledge, became very arrogant and began to despise spiritual life. Again mere book learning was considered to be quite sufficient in this modern age. So Sri Ramakrishna had to dispense with book learning altogether, and though illiterate he was able to show to the world that self-realization required only earnest efforts and spiritual disciplines and not book learning, which could sharpen the intellect only. He thus illustrated in his life the truth of the great message of the ancient seers who declared :—न कर्मणा न प्रजया न धनेन न च विद्या योगैर्नैकेऽमृतत्वमानुषः
Not by work, not by progeny, wealth or learning but by renunciation alone Immortality is attained.

Another characteristic feature of the life of Sri Ramakrishna was that he entertained no prejudices of caste in estimating the spiritual worth or competence of a person. In modern times the members of the higher castes have come to regard religion and spiritual life as their sole monopoly and have tried their best to keep away the sacred books from what they consider the profane hearing of the Sudra. That this was not the case in the days when Sanatana Dharma was in its pristine glory and strength is amply proved by the fact that there are many instances of low class people of high spiritual worth being canonised as saints and sages and high caste men according to them due respect and reverence. Sri Ramakrishna has in his life emphatically reasserted this ancient truth the breach of which has been a standing libel against Sanatana Dharma, and perhaps the cause of India's downfall and degradation. The only point that had in his eyes any significance in judging a person's spiritual competence was the aspirant's spirit of renunciation and thirst after realisation. Thus we

find in the ranks of his disciples a large number of persons of non-Brahmin castes, and many of them who were fit for it were initiated by him into the holy life of Sannyas—the culminating stage in the life of a follower of the religion of the Vedas. In this way Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest spiritual being of modern times, has given the death-blow to all ideas of preference and monopoly by birth in matters relating to the spirit.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna eloquently illustrates his oft-quoted expression, "Shakti and Shaktiman are not different". Even the fallen women were not debarred from being blest with his divine touch. For, to him they were also the manifestations of the divine energy in another form. The scriptures declare :—विद्या समस्तास्तव देवि भेदः स्त्रियः समस्ताः सकला जगत्सु । (The Vedas and the women of this world, O Mother, are but thy manifested forms). Again the Manusamhita says :— यत् नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते नन्दन्ते सर्वदेवताः । यत्नतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वस्वत्राफला क्रियाः ॥ (The gods are pleased whose women are worshipped and venerated and all the activities of the land whose they are not duly honoured fail to produce their desired result.) It is the contemptuous neglect and irreverence in the treatment meted out to our women folk in flagrant violation of these scriptural injunctions that have been mainly responsible for the deplorable condition of India today. So it was the mission of Sri Ramakrishna to demonstrate the ideal sort of relationship that existed between the sexes in the days of India's greatness when she could boast of her "Ghosa, Lopamudra and Viswavyasa who composed Vedic hymns and became Rishis", and also of her Gargi, Maitreyi, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Draupadi, Ubhayabharati, Khaqa and Lilavati of revered memory. Sri Ramakrishna realised godhead as the Divine Mother, and to his eyes transformed by this vision divine woman lost all sensual significance and all members of the opposite sex, including the so called fallen women, appeared as the special manifestations of the Divine Mother and the living symbols of her glory. This realisation of the motherhood of woman reached the culminating point in his life when he was able, at the end of his period of spiritual practices, to offer worship at the feet of his own wife Srimati Sarada Devi with whom he had no earthly connection but was united with the cord of Divine Love, and whom he considered to be another manifested form of the Divine Energy. Srimati Sarada Devi also demonstrated what an Indian woman was capable of doing, if properly guided and instructed. India had always the special distinction of demonstrating the Motherhood of God along with the Fatherhood thereof; and the climax was reached when Sri Ramakrishna felt

no scruples to offer worship at the feet of his wife. For, to him all the women of the world were only, as already stated, the manifested forms of the Divine Energy. So he could not think of Srimati Sarada Devi otherwise, even though she was his wife.

The pure gold as Sri Ramakrishna was he was pained to see that human beings in spite of their rational faculty should be so base as to hanker after carnal desires only like beasts completely forgetting the nobler aspirations of life. Man should have a higher idea of life and should rise above what his instinct dictates him to do. Then only would he be led to the path of self-realization, which is only open to Mankind, because every soul is to pass through the human birth for the realization of the Ultimate Truth. Sri Ramakrishna had to set, therefore, such a noble example before the world for the guidance of mankind, specially in view of the adage that "example is better than precept". His earthly life untainted by the pursuit of money and lust, the hickerings for name and fame, or the narrow jealousies of sect and caste, and rendered luminous beyond compare by the super-sensuous sublimity of Divine realisation is the greatest legacy that he has left to the succeeding generations, and it is certain that the future well-being of humanity rests in a large measure on how far it responds to the call of this great sage of Modern India.

IN QUEST OF TRUTH

By Kshitish Chandra Roy Choudhury, M.A.

The Katha Upanishad begins with a beautiful story. We shall repeat it here in the belief that it may stand infinite repetitions. Once upon a time there was one Bajasravas who resolved to give his all in a certain sacrifice. He began to give away even his old cows who had ceased to bear calves or give any milk. Now Bajasravas had a son who, though young, possessed real wisdom. The act of his father wounded his feelings; he thought the useless kine had better not be given. Nachiketa argued that if the father was giving away the old cows because he had resolved to give his "all", he should give away his son (i.e., Nachiketa) as well. So he asked his father as to whom he was intended to be given away. Bajasravas was very much annoyed when his son had repeated the question thrice, and he exclaimed, "I'll give thee to Yama" (Pluto: Death King). Nachiketa felt he did not deserve it and the father also repented for what had escaped from his mouth. But Nachiketa consoled his father saying that life was transient, and that it would be highly improper

not to keep one's word. And so he started for the abode of Death to redeem his father's pledge. Now it so happened that Yama was not at home when Nachiketa reached there, and he had to wait there for three days before Yama returned. Yama according to Hindu mythology is also the King of Virtue; he is the most impartial of gods and has the keenest sense of right and wrong inasmuch as he has to weigh each living thing in the balance as soon as it dies, and give it its deserts. Yama was filled with remorse when he found that a young Brahmin lad had been waiting in his house without food or sleep for full three days. As a compensation, he promised Nachiketa three boons. As one of the gifts Nachiketa wanted to know what happens to man after death. Yama tried to evade it by all means but could not—he had to tell Nachiketa the mystery. There is a rare beauty in this story where a young boy stands face to face with Death himself in quest of Truth and compels him to tell what is beyond. In real courage and the capacity to rise above temptations, even a Sir Galahad could hardly measure his strength with Nachiketa. We give below a somewhat free rendering of the conversation that took place between Yama and Nachiketa:

Y.—"Salutation to thee, O Brahmin,
 May good to me thy blessings bring;
 Full three nights, O venerable guest,
 Hast thou in my house been fasting;
 Choose one gift for each night's suffering."

N.—"Let this be the first boon, O Yama kind,
 That my father be freed from all cares of me,
 Let mercy drive anger from his mind:
 This I humbly pray to thee.
 And when delivered from this dreadful fold
 I return home free and 'live,
 May he know and love me as of old,
 And all my offences forgive."

Y.—"I give thou what thou asketh:
 Thy father to thee will be kinder than before;
 He'll welcome thee from the jaws of death;
 By my decree he'll love thee more and more."

N.—"Fear is unknown in the heavenly world,
 Its magic gates Old Age cannot enter;
 There thou too dost not make any raid,
 And people feel neither thirst nor hunger.
 Thou alone knowest, O Yama,

The secrets of that sacrificial fire
 Which people to heaven can take,
 And make them taste its divine nectar.
 Tell me of its wondrous mystery,
 'Tis my humble and earnest prayer ;
 I seek as your second giftie
 The knowledge of the Yajnic Fire."

Y.—" I know, O Nachiketa, full well,
 The mysteries of the Primal Fire ;
 I'll tell you the secret in full detail,
 With proper attention thou shouldst hear.
 Knowest thou this Fire to be
 The means of attaining higher spheres,
 Knowest it to be the Creation's support,
 'Tis enshrined in the hearts of seers."
 To young Nachiketa then Yama told
 The mysteries of the first-born Fire,
 The manner 'tis to be installed,
 The number of bricks it would require.
 Yama's lessons Nachiketa repeated,
 Word for word, letter for letter,
 And Yama was so extremely glad
 He gave Nachiketa one more favour.

Y.— " True fitness hast thou shown
 For a disciple's earnest labours ;
 Let by thy name this Fire be known,
 And take this garland of wondrous powers.
 He who worships this Fire,
 With proper ceremony and devotion,
 Will attain God conquering Desire,
 And be lost in Peace and Meditation.
 He will tear the bonds of flesh
 Even before this body is dead ;
 He'll conquer vice and passions' clash
 Before this mortal slough is shed.
 I have told thee of the Yajnic Fire,
 They 'ill call it Nachiketagni ;
 I've granted thy second prayer,
 Thy last prayer now tellest me."

N.— " There's an eternal doubt in the minds of men
 About what happens after death ;
 Some say newer lives the soul doth span,

Others say in the Void it melteth.

What happens when a man dies ?

Is there really a next world ?

Does the soul live newer lives,

Or is it in the Void engulfed ?”

Y.— “The gods put me the self same question,

’Tis not an easy thing to learn,

Press not the query, O son of man,

Please choose a different one.”

N.— “If the gods even were curious,

And if this truth be hard to master,

To know it I’m even more anxious,

I must not change my prayer.

There’s nothing more worth knowing,

There’s not a teacher fitter than you,

If I turn away without learning,

Lifelong this folly I’ll have to rue.”

Y.— “Ask for horses, cattle and animals, O Nachikot,

For elephants, gold and vast empires,

Sons and grandsons of great valour beget,

And yourself live for a million years.

You ask at your will for things

Never enjoyed by mortal man,

Pleasures beyond the dreams of kings,

Beyond the poetic fancy’s ken.

Take these women with chariots and lyres

With untold rubies, jewels and wealth.

Be served by these celestial girls,

But try not lift the veil of death.”

N.— “Thank thee, O Yama, for the words kind,

Thank thee for thy promise and deed ;

If I were by these temptations beguiled,

I’d be a blockhead and a stupid.

Thy luxuries will fade to-morrow,

Robbing my senses of all their powers ;

Better keep for thyself, O Yama,

Thy music, dance, and girls.

Man can never with riches be content,

Riches I’ll get by thy blessing,

I’ll live and die at thy behest,

So long as thou art Death King;

By these empty lures I won’t be enticed.

I would stick to my own request,
 If thou would'st give me the boon promised,
 The knowledge I want to me thou givest.

I am a son of mortal man,
 Subject to death, disease, and palsy ;
 A million summers to me are a burden,
 As thou well canst see.

Having come to the gods immortal
 Whom Old Age and Death do obey,
 Seeing life's nobler and higher ideal
 With mere tinsels shall I play ?

Tell me what's beyond death,
 The thing I want to know ;
 What remains when the body decayeth ?
 Is the soul born anew ?

Now, O King, thou clearly seest
 What's Nachiketa's final prayer ;
 Whether or not thou likest,
 He won't change it for another."

Y.— " There are things Good and things Pleasant
 That drag men in diverse ways ;
 Woo unto the man who seeks joys transient ;
 Quest of the Good in the long run pays.
 Bravo unto thee, O Nachiketa,
 For seeing Darkness from Light ;
 Thee lures could not misguide,
 And Desires swerve from Right
 Wisdom and Ignorance are as enemies for sooth,
 They lead men to opposite goals ;
 I know Nachiketa as the follower of Truth
 Whom no fear baffles nor temptation cajoles.
 One who is in ignorance steeped,
 But with arrogance purblind,
 Is ever misled and worried
 Like a blind man leading a blind.
 Divine truths can't be learned
 By the thoughtless and the vain ;
 Thinking there's no next world
 They come to my sway again and again.
 There be many who haven't heard of it,
 There be others who have heard,

Who have listened with attention fixt,
 But hearing have not grasped.
 Strange is the teacher of this knowledge,
 Strange the disciple who learns,
 Blessed be his soul always,
 Blessed the wisdom he earns."

Thus the "strange" teacher narrates to the "blessed" disciple the truth of what happens after death. If any reader feels curious, he is advised to look into the Upanishad itself.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE USE OF MACHINERY & INDIA'S SPIRITUAL IDEAL

A solution to the problem of poverty in India is at present attracting the anxious concern of all thinkers and national workers in our country. India is often called an agricultural country and its population described as rural, and the improvement of the agricultural methods practised in the country in the light of modern scientific developments is pointed out as the remedy for her present economic prostration. Undoubtedly if effectively carried out this will go a great way in improving our condition. But agriculture produces raw materials, and many of them have to be manufactured into finished articles before they are fit for consumption. If a country does not undertake this manufacturing process, at least in the case of articles necessary for home consumption, it incurs a serious loss and in the end finds itself drained of its wealth as India finds herself to-day. Hence comes the need for knowledge of technical processes and industrial methods and organisation. In the modern world the general drift is towards the adoption of large scale organisation involving the use of elaborate machineries, and India too cannot resist this influence on the whole without serious consequences on her economic life. There is, however, a strong opinion at present in our country against the use of machinery and favouring the small scale form of industrial organisation. The argument is put forth by persons sharing this view that large scale industrialism has produced in western society many ugly features from which India should take a lesson, and that a large country like India with long-standing rural traditions cannot afford to urbanise her teeming population as in the case of the small industrial countries of Europe. Let us take into consideration at the outset the bare economic aspect of the question. The sole criterion which decides the capacity of a commodity to stand competition in the market is its cheapness and this depends upon the speed and economies effected in its manufacture. That the adoption of machinery and the principle of division of labour are more effective in this matter is an undeniable fact, and the dispute in our country between the large and small scale forms of industrial organisation has to be judged in the first place according to this standard. Moreover, there are industries like the manufacture of machines and other iron and steel materials which require huge capital and elaborate technical and mechanical devices for their successful undertaking. And a large country like India with its vast agricultural and engineering requirements, with its extensive railway lines and huge army cannot afford to forego the use of machinery and allow a large part of its wealth to drain away into foreign countries for the purchase of machines, fire arms, railway requisites, automobiles, etc.

We do not mean to say by this that cottage industries have to disappear entirely from our country, but that their sphere of activity is somewhat different. Wherever products are to be uniform in nature and wherever technical processes are by nature complicated and expensive the use of machinery is unavoidable. But where artistic variation is the rule and individual taste the main consideration, cottage industries and handiwork have a fair scope. For example in India where many people select their *dothies* and *saries* according to individual tastes, hand-weaving in which artistic variations may be easily effected can fairly co-exist with the mill industry producing fabrics of a uniform type. In the case of many articles of luxury this is the case. Even the much spoken of *Charka*, if its productive capacity is in some way increased by improvement in its mechanism and if khaddar remains a fashion in India and maintains its popularity, can justify its existence here only as a *subsidiary source of income* to Indian peasantry. But to pit it against machinery, or to expect that it will be able to supplant the same is an idle hope lacking in wisdom and insight into the economic forces working in the modern world.

The next question for consideration is whether the mechanising of industries stands in any way against the *spiritual ideals* of India. The most outstanding features of modern industrialism that are condemned as immoral and unspiritual are the tendencies of industrial countries for exploiting weaker nations in attempting to find a market for finished products, and the greed generally shown by capitalists in increasing their profits at the expense of the legitimate interests of their employees. The former question need not arise in India if we do not accept the western ideal that civilisation means the raising of the standard of life to its maximum limits. In the West nations have accepted this ideal, and they are trying to increase their productive capacities to the utmost, not with a view to cater to their very limited internal needs alone but to sell their manufactures to other countries by means fair or foul and thus to increase their national income and thereby their standard of life. Naturally, in such countries the question of finding a market becomes more important than of production, and political and military power therefore comes to the rescue of the industrialist by enslaving weaker nations politically and blighting their industrial possibilities, so that their own manufactures could be dumped on these subjected nations. This is exploitation and we in India need not adopt such methods if we remain true to our own spiritual ideals and make people understand that while it is legitimate that men should have means to keep themselves healthy in body and in mind, it is against the eastern conception of civilisation to increase the physical needs inordinately.

In the next place India herself is a vast country with teeming population and varied needs, and therefore the market for our manufactured commodities is at hand. We need not go out and *exploit* other nations as the westerners do in order to have a luxurious living at home. If after satisfying her internal needs India can sell her surplus manufactures to foreign nations without the aid of military and political manipulations, at a rate cheaper than what other countries can afford, it will not be exploitation but only legitimate commerce and there is nothing inherently unspiritual in it. Her industrialisation too need not be so thorough as in some of the western countries; for her agricultural possibilities are great and with improved methods perhaps two-thirds of her present population can have a decent living on land alone. It is the surplus population which cannot subsist on land

that has to be diverted into healthy and profitable industries primarily for satisfying internal needs, which at present is done by the purchase of foreign goods in exchange for Indian raw products. In this case urbanisation too need only be partial and India need not entirely break away from her ancient rural traditions.

The second charge of capitalism exploiting labour and the evil of slums, low wages, etc., connected with it are problems that have not yet been completely solved in the industrial world. But it has to be admitted that labour conditions obtaining in European countries at present have far improved from what they were at the beginning of industrial revolution, and the State which formerly maintained a neutral attitude in this matter is now-a-days taking a more active interest in setting right the wrongs done by capitalists to their employees. With the greater political influence that Labour is coming to wield in modern times we may expect a speedy solution of these problems. India has the advantage of the experience of European nations in this matter and she may utilise it to good purpose by avoiding their mistakes. By an effective intervention of the State much of this can be avoided. Instead of avoiding the evil which is quite possible, the evil itself cannot be pointed out as an argument against the use of machinery. Such an argument has not been advanced even by organisations representing labourers who form the aggrieved party in this matter.

Hence we conclude that under the existing economic conditions in the world, *Charka* or any other form of cottage industry cannot by itself furnish the final solution to India's economic problems, that an extensive use of machinery is necessary for the economic uplift of our country, and that there is nothing in its use that stands inherently against the *spiritual ideals* of India.

THE NON-DWIJAS' CLAIM TO THE VEDAS

To

The Editor, Vedanta Kesari.

Dear Sir.

Will you kindly answer the following questions through the columns of your esteemed journal and oblige :—

(1) Is there any authoritative passage in the Vedas which declares that the Vedas can be studied by non-dwijas? (2) In the absence of such authority and in the face of prohibition by Smritis, is it not unorthodox to teach the Vedas and impart *pranava* to non-dwijas? How is it that you do not counteract such a heterodox propaganda?

— Orthodox

In reply to these questions we shall only quote Swami Vivekananda (Complete Works, Part III. pp 456 and 457) :

"Who are these Rishis? Vatsyayana says,—'He who has attained through proper means the direct realization of dharma, he alone can be a Rishi, even if he is a mlecccha by birth. Thus it is that in ancient times, Vasishtha born of an illegitimate union, Vyasa the son of a fisher-woman, Narada the son of a maid-servant with uncertain parentage and many others of like nature, attained to Rishihood. Truly speaking it comes to this then that no distinction should be made with one who has realized the Truth.....This Veda is our only authority and every one has the right to it.

यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीमावदानि जनेभ्यः ।

ब्रह्मगजन्त्राभ्यां शूद्राय चार्याय च स्याय चारणाय ॥

(This blissful Vedic knowledge is to be brought to all, the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Sudras, the Vaisyas, the maid-servants and the untouchables.) Thus says the Sukla Yajur Veda (Ch. 26—verse 2). Can you show any authority from this Veda of ours that every one has not the right to it? The *puranas* no doubt say that a certain caste has the right to such and such a recension of the Vedas, or a certain caste has no right to study them, or that this portion of the Vedas is for the Satya Yuga and that portion is for the Kali Yuga. But mark you, the Veda does not say so, it is only your Puranas that say so. But can the servant dictate to the master? The Smritis, Puranas, Tantras—all these are acceptable only so far as they agree with the Vedas; and wherever they are contradictory they are to be rejected as unreliable. But now-a-days we have put the Puranas on even a higher pedestal than the Vedas!" In another place the Swami says, "Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmins. Initiate all even down to the Chandalas in these *fiery mantrams*." We vote with our friend for orthodoxy, but with this difference that we are for Vedic orthodoxy, while our friend is contented with Smartha orthodoxy.

But this question of rights apart, the esteemed correspondent seems to be labouring under the wrong impression that the Vedas and other Sastras are a sealed book to the non-dwijas even in these days. Thanks to the large-hearted among the Brahmins and the printing press, the Hindu scriptures are already in the hands of *all*. There are already many good Vedic scholars even among the so-called untouchables, and there are schools conducted by them where the Vedas and other scriptures form the chief subjects of study. Hence from a practical point also it is no longer possible for the dwijas to keep away the scriptures from what they consider the profane eyes of the Sudras. If without understanding this altered situation the dwijas try to maintain that scriptural study is their exclusive privilege, they will not only cut a very ridiculous figure in the eyes of the world, but also be responsible for the greater fault of alienating from the fold of Hindu religion a large section of self-respecting non-dwijas who will no longer like to remain as believers in such an exclusive religion while more democratic faiths like Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are unfolding before them the visions of freedom, welcoming them into the sacred fold of spiritual brotherhood, and promising them an equal status with the other members of their respective community.

Our friend also forgets that it is not for him nor for us to determine the caste of any community. Those days when the Brahmin had the exclusive right of deciding the Varna of other communities and when they bowed down to their decision are gone, gone for ever. Whether right or wrong they are not in a mood to be ordered about. They have taken it into their own hands to decide it for themselves as to which Varna they will belong, whether you and I give the sanction to it or not. For the present they may care only for the substance. But none can say how long this stage will last. But if a time comes when they think that there is something in a *name* also we do not see our way how you and I can object to their taking to it. They would not mind any quotation from the Sastras which smacks of any privilege. They will take them to be spurious and interpolated by selfish and privileged classes and not uttered by the large-hearted and noble-minded Rishis. Our friend does not see that this is *Kali Yuga* and the Sudras and the mleccchas are bound to have their own way

and any talk of privilege in this age will only be met with ridicule at the hands of the Sudras as well as the cultured section of humanity.

EDITOR, V. K.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Ramanuja's Idea of the Finite Self : by P. N. Srinivasachari, M. A., Professor of Philosophy, Pachaiyappa's College, Madras : Published by Longman's Green & Co. Price Rs. 3. Pp. 113.

The position occupied by Sankara's Advaita philosophy in the minds of the students of Vedanta in India as well as outside is so great that the Vedanta has very often been identified with Advaita alone, and the other systems are hardly understood and appreciated and their claims passed unrecognised. This might probably be due to the lack of able and enthusiastic exponents of other systems. The present volume undoubtedly has removed a great need and will, we hope, save Vishishtadvaita Philosophy from the misrepresentations of other schools of thought as well as of those champions who have misunderstood it. We have the assurance of Prof. S. Kuppuswami Sastri in his foreword to the book that "it renders the fundamental tenets of the Vishishtadvaita School perfectly intelligible to all average students of philosophy in a way in which there would no longer be room for any misapprehension about those tenets." All students of philosophy will certainly be grateful for this signal service.

The full significance of the relation between Jiva and Iswara as conceived by Ramanuja is elucidated at length in the present volume. Ramanuja insists on the equal validity of all the Upanishadic texts—*Bheda*, *Abheda* and *Ghataka Srutis* and postulates the reality of experience in all its levels. Brahman is the ground of experience as well as its goal. God is an organic unity. Both the sentient and insentient beings (*chit* and *achit*) are modifications of Brahman and of a tissue with Him. The idea of Jiva as a *prakara* (mode) of Iswara is the central concept on the logical side which distinguishes Ramanuja's philosophy. Three implications come out of this with regard to the nature of Jiva in its relationship to God, *viz.*, *upadeya* (effect), *visheshana* (attribute), and *amsa* (part). On the ethical side the divine will is reconciled to individual responsibility and self-effort by the doctrine of *Niyamya* and *Niyanta*, the initiative in every action being shared by the Jiva as well as Iswara leaving the choice to the individual who is responsible for the result. This together with the conceptions of *sessa* and *seshin* (the instrument and the goal), and of *swamin* and *dasa* (master and servant) completes the ethical implications of the *prakara prakari bhava*. The claims of immanence and transcendence are reconciled by the doctrine of *sarira sariri bhava* (Universe including the Jiva is the body of God who is its soul). "Ramanuja regards this the very heart of his system. It furnishes the *raison de etre* and the differentia of his Vedanta." The end of religious life is not Mukti, but extreme love of God which delights in his service. Karma Yoga leads to *Jnana* which is followed by Bhakti.

Ramanuja claims that his system bridges the gulf between *dwaita* and *advaita* and maintains that his doctrine of *prakara* (mode) and *prakarin* (substance) reconciles their contradictions. But though Ramanuja affirms the equal validity of all *sruti* texts the *nirguna* *Srutis* have really no meaning or place in his system unless resort is

made to the narrow interpretations put on them as the negation only of inauspicious qualities. Ramanuja postulates the reality of experience in all its levels but the experience of the transcendental Absolute as a bare unity is rejected as *viparita jnana*, thus fighting shy of the conclusions of the sound epistemological principles laid down by him. His attempt at a synthesis has been therefore attended with the defects of contradiction and exclusion. Sankara too rejected the validity of all experience other than that of the Absolute which nullifies and abolishes all other perceptions of Reality. A doctrine of exegesis which accepts the equal validity of the three stages of perception involved in all the three systems of Vedanta philosophy and of all texts—*bheda*, *abheda*, and *ghataka*—which gives utterance to these perceptions alone would seem to afford a satisfactory basis for a real synthesis of religious experiences embodied in the Vedas.

Professor P. N. Srinivasachari's work is not historical in its method or scope, but expository and comparative. Though the presentation does not propose to be argumentative, it is quite comprehensive and is not wanting in lucidity. It will be a very useful handbook to all students of philosophy and we strongly recommend it to those who are interested in the doctrines of the Vedanta. The get-up of the book also leaves nothing to be desired. S. I.

Srimad Bhagavatam (translated into English prose, Vols. 1 and 11: by S. Subba Rau, M.A. : published by S. Lakshmana Rao. Printed at Sri Vyasa Press, Tirupati.

In the field of Hindu devotional literature Srimad Bhagavatam perhaps occupies the first place, both for the fervency and exhaustiveness with which it depicts the varied aspects of devotion as well as for the profundity with which it discusses the various phases of the Vedanta philosophy. According to its own description it is the fairest fruit of the tree of Vedas. Although there have been some previous translations of this great scripture into English, it is doubtful whether any of them are at present in print. Mr. Subba Rau has therefore placed the English-reading public under a deep debt of gratitude by his present translation.

The book is complete in two thick volumes covering on the whole about 1696 pages. The translation is done verse by verse and printed as such, so that it may be possible to follow it easily with the original. The scheme of translation has not been to render the verses into English literally, but to present them in the light of the interpretation of the three main schools of Vedanta philosophy—*Adwaita*, *Vishishtadwaita* and *Dwaita*. Accordingly it closely follows the famous *Adwaita* commentary of Sridharaswami, and wherever there are differences of opinion the *Vishishtadvaita* interpretation of Sri Viraraghavachariar and the *Dwaita* commentary of Sri Vijayadhwaja are given in the shape of footnotes in order to economise space and facilitate understanding. The author has succeeded, as far as it is within the province of a translation, to reproduce something of the dignity of style and tone of devotion so characteristic of this immortal work. A translation of this nature is alike useful to those who have no access to Sanskrit language as well as to those whose knowledge of it is not enough to understand fully the rather stiff style in which this scripture and its commentaries are written. We feel sure that a perusal of it along with the original will enable one who is fairly conversant with Sanskrit to appreciate fully the beauty and sweetness of Bhagavatam, and we therefore heartily recommend this translation to all English-knowing students of this great devotional scripture.

NEWS AND REPORTS

R. K. MISSION STUDENTS' HOME,
7 HALDER LANE, BOWBAZAR, CALCUTTA

The Ramakrishna Mission has been conducting this Home for the past 10 years for providing the material as well as the spiritual needs of poor and deserving youths going up for higher education in the Calcutta University. They are supplied free of cost with everything they require—food, lodging, fees, books, clothing, etc. There is also a provision for admitting a minority of paying boarders. While providing the students with facilities for secular education the Home seeks to supplement the same by giving them a training for developing their character and efficiency. It is run under the direct guidance and care of Hindu Sanyasins on the lines of Brahmacharya Ashrama, co-ordinating the ancient ideals of education with the modern. During the year under review there were 23 students on the roll of whom two were paying and the rest free boarders or concession holders. Of these, seven sat for University examinations and six of them came out successful. Regular religious classes, numbering 125 for the whole year, were held thrice every week for the exposition of the Upanishads, Gita and the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature. The Home library of 700 books was supplemented by a number of books as well as periodicals in English, Bengali and Hindi. A manuscript magazine and Saturday meetings for discussing socio-religious problems formed the other important aspects of the intellectual life of the Home. The health of the students continued to be fairly good and some of them made appreciable progress in body-building by regular physical exercises. All household duties except cooking were managed by the students themselves and the duties were distributed every month by a representative committee of students. A tailoring class was also held by an honorary expert.

The inauguration of a vocational section was a notable event of the year. A well-wisher of the Home presented the institution with 20 bighas of land at Gauripur and strenuous efforts were made to develop it into an agricultural and dairy farm for giving the students training in these useful occupations during vacations. It is proposed to transfer the Home from its present rented building in the city to the newly acquired plot where the students can have a calmer and healthier atmosphere and also opportunities for getting a first-hand knowledge of village reconstruction.

The total receipts with previous years' balance came to Rs. 10,268-10-6 of which the total disbursement amounted to Rs. 6,438-6-6, leaving a balance of Rs. 3,830-4-0.

R. K. MISSION BRANCH CENTRE, BARSAL

The Secretary of the R.K. Mission Branch Centre, Barsal has sent us a report of the pox-relief work carried on under the auspices of the Ashrama during the year 1928-1929 in the villages of Dwarika, Tulshighata, Chakhaila and the town of Barsal itself. Most of the patients were Mohammedans. The District Board and the local Central Co-operative Bank deserve the hearty thanks of the Mission for their timely and ungrudging help. The total amount received from the public for this purpose came up to Rs. 393-3-3 and the amount spent was Rs. 400-3-9, the deficit being met by a loan from the general fund of the Ashrama.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman ’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER



असितगिरिसमं स्यात् कज्जलं सिन्धुपात्रं
सुरतरुवरशाखा लेखनी पत्रमुर्वी ।
लिखति यदि गृहीत्वा सागदा सर्वकालं
तदपि तव गुणानामीश पारं न याति ॥
बहुरजसे विश्वोत्पत्तौ भवाय नमो नमः
प्रबलतमसे तत्संहारे हराय, नमो नमः ।
जनसुखकृते सत्त्वस्थित्यै मृडाय नमो नमः
प्रमहसि पदे निर्वृत्तगुण्ये शिवाय नमो नमः ॥

If Sarada, the goddess of learning, were to write for eternity with the biggest branch of the celestial tree for her pen, the whole earth for paper, with the blue mountain as ink and the ocean for the vessel thereof—even then, O Lord, thy attributes cannot be fully described.

Salutations to Thee, O Lord, who as Creator assumeth the immense power of Rajas and produceth the universe who as Destroyer annihilate it by the power of mighty Tamas and who as Protector blesseth men with happiness through the power of Sattva. Salutations to Thee, O Siva, who art again beyond the three qualities in Thy transcendent aspect.

MAHIMNASTOTRAM

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

III

Sri Ramakrishna is in Samadhi night and day, and is quite unconscious of the passing of time. Occasionally he speaks to the devotees on God. It is about 4 p.m. M. finds the Master sitting on the small cot in his room, all absorbed in thoughts of God. After a while he speaks.

Sri Ramakrishna (to M.): One should believe in divine forms. Do you know the meaning of Jagaddhatri form? It represents the Divine Mother as supporting the universe. Unless She supports and protects, the world would fall off and come to destruction. The Mother is seated on a lion that keeps an elephant under his paws. The mind is likened to an elephant and the Mother appears in the heart of him who succeeds in controlling it.

Rakhal: 'Mind is the mad elephant'—so the poet has put it.

Sri Ramakrishna: The Lion of the Singhavahini (the mother sitting on a lion) keeps the elephant under restraint.

It is evening and Aratrikam is being conducted in the temple. On nightfall Sri Ramakrishna is repeating holy names inside his room. Incense has been already burned, and the Master is sitting with folded hands on his small cot, and meditating on the Mother.

Govinda Mukherji of Belgharia and his friends have come. After saluting the Master they have taken their seats on the floor. M. and Rakhal are also present.

The moon is up and in her silvery light the outside world is smiling, as it were, in silence. Inside the room the devotees are looking in speechless wonder at the peaceful form of the Master. The Master is in a state of ecstasy. After a while he speaks, but still God-intoxicated.

Sri Ramakrishna (in ecstatic mood): Just put to me any questions you like. I shall answer them all.

This set Govinda and other devotees thinking.

Govinda: Sir, why is the form of Shyama (Kali) represented as dark-blue in colour?

Sri Ramakrishna: It appears so because of distance. As you go near it, there is no colour whatsoever. From a distance the water of the lake appears to be dark, but as you approach it and take a littl

of it in your hand, you find it is not so. The sky too looks blue from a distance but look at the sky near you, it has no colour! The more you approach God the more will you know that He is without name and form. As you come away and stand at a distance again you see "My Divine Mother of dark blue hue." Her colour is like that of the "blue grass-flower." Is she Purusha (the male principle) or Prakriti (the primal energy)?

"A certain devotee worshipped the Mother. Another person on coming to see the image found a holy thread across its shoulder! He asked, 'How is it you have given a holy thread to the Mother?' The devotee replied, 'Friend, probably you have come to know the Mother as She is. But as for myself, I have not been able to realise yet whether She is Purusha or Prakriti. That is why I have given her a holy thread?'

"Really Shyama and Brahman are one and the same. That which has form is formless too. That which has attribute is also without attributes. Brahman is Shakti and Shakti is Brahman. There is no difference between the two. Both are Sachchidananda (Existence, Knowledge, Bliss, Absolute)."

Govinda : What is Yoga-maya?

Sri Ramakrishna : Yoga-maya is the union of Purusha (the male principle or absolute) and Prakriti (the female principle or the primal energy); whatever you see is born of this union. Take for instance the form of Shiva-Kali,—Kali standing on Shiva. Shiva lies as if dead, and Kali stands looking at Him. This symbolises the union of Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha, the Absolute, is inactive; therefore Shiva appears as dead, and in conjunction with Him Prakriti is doing everything. She is creating, preserving and destroying the universe. This is also the meaning of the united forms of Krishna and Radha. It is this union of the two that has made the body pliant, and to symbolise the union, Sri Krishna wears a pearl on his nose, and Radha a sapphire. Radha's complexion is very fair, bright as a pearl, Sri Krishna's colour is blue: hence their respective ornaments. And it is for this reason, again, that Sri Krishna puts on yellow cloth, and Radha blue robe.

"Who is the greatest of devotees? It is he who after the attainment of Brahma Jnana, realises that Brahman Himself has become Jiva and Jagat (the individual soul and the universe)—the twenty-four categories of the philosopher. First you have to get up to the terrace, leaving behind the steps, by following the process of *neti, neti*, 'not this, not this'. On reaching there you see that the roof is made of the same materials—brick and mortar—as the staircase. Similarly the man of knowledge finds that Brahman has become Jiva, Jagat, and everything else.

"Mere intellectualism! I spit on it. I don't want it. (The Master spits). Why should I follow the path of mere intellectualism and make my heart dry up? As long as there is the distinction of "I" and "Thou", I want to cherish pure devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord."

Sri Ramakrishna (to Govinda): Sometimes I say 'Thou art I, and I am Thou'. At other times, again, I feel 'Thou, Thou alone art' the 'I' is nowhere to be found.....The incarnation of the Lord is manifestation of Shakti, primal energy. According to some, Rama and Krishna are like two waves of the ocean of Sachchidananda. One attains Supreme Consciousness (Chaitanya) after the realisation of Unity (Advaita). Then he sees that One Consciousness is pervading everything. After this he enjoys Supreme Bliss (Ananda). Hence the order—'Advaita, Chitanya, Nityananda'.

Sri Ramakrishna (to M.): I tell you, you must not be sceptical about divine forms. Do believe that spiritual forms are real and then meditate on the one you like best.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Govinda): You know that as long as there are the desires for worldly enjoyment, the heart does not yearn to know and see God. The child loses himself in his play. You may make him forget everything by offering some sweets to him. He may eat them for a while, but there comes a time when he is tired of playing and eating and he says, 'I want to go to mamma'. He refuses to be tempted with sweets any more. He is ready to accompany even a stranger—one whom he does not know and has not seen before—if he offers to take him to his mother. He will go with any one who carries him in his arms.

"The heart yearns for God after the worldly desires have been satisfied. The thought of realising Him then becomes uppermost in his mind. And he is ready to follow any one who offers to show him the way."

M. [aside]: The heart becomes eager to realise God only after the attachment for the world has passed away.

DURGA PUJA AND ITS BEARING ON NATIONAL LIFE

The culture of India has since time immemorial been the fulfilment of all forms of human thought. In the depth of its being there is that one cosmic Unity where all seeming contradictions in the world of our experience converge, and find a grand harmony rarely to be met within any other systems of thought. Religion is the very core of India's cultural life and includes the varieties of conceptions ranging from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism. "In fact from

the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the lowest ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists, and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu religion." And the conception of the Eternal Being as the Mother of the universe is, like the facet of a diamond, but a happy aspect of our collective cultural wisdom. India has thus learnt to realise Unity in variety and variety in Unity; in fact it is in this comprehensive character of the Hindu religious system that its intrinsic merit as the matrix of all thoughts and systems extant in the world, lies. The worship of the one Absolute Reality as the Mother-Power is not a new phenomenon in the life-history of the Indian people: it is as old as their culture itself; and the inauguration of the Mother-worship in our religious life is but a natural sequence in the grand process of our spiritual evolution.

Durga Puja—the worship of the Mother Divine—embodies one aspect of the deep spiritual consciousness of the Indian race. It has received a universal recognition in the land and has crystallised into one of the grandest festivals of the Hindus. With the advent of the season the whole country from the heart of the Himalayas down to the distant Cape Comorin quivers with a thrill of unprecedented joy and jubilation. Nature clothed in the grandeur of her panoramic beauty casts a bewitching spell all over the land. The latent aspirations of men are quickened into a devotional ecstasy, and the accumulated worries, and troubles, woes and sufferings of the live-long year are engulfed in one intense passion for the worship of the Mother. Millions of hearts swayed by countless aspirations beat in unison to the one cosmic tune, and the whole country is plunged into an ocean of spontaneous mirth and hilarity. Even an out-and-out pessimist can hardly find on that occasion a single trace of sadness and despair that, at other times, is writ so large on the forehead of the down-trodden people of India. For this is the only occasion when the entire nation bids adieu to the past buffets and bickerings of life and stands on a common platform of brotherhood to offer the sacred flower of love and devotion at the altar of the Mother. "The Mother of the universe shines forth in the life of humanity as a woman, as family life. Here she is maiden, perfect in beauty, nun-like in holiness, whose past and future are a glorified wife-hood, on whose rapture of devotion the eye of the Great God Himself has fallen, and who enters the Indian household, Goddess and Queen notwithstanding, as, after all, the little wedded daughter, returning for a ten days' visit to her father's house." The Indian genius has thus visualised the Mother as the living embodiment of all that is tender and lovely and has ulti-

mately lost itself in a rapture of ineffable joy in its transcendent flight to realize the Motherhood of God. The Mother is worshipped in this solemn season of the year all over India under various names such as Amba (in Kashmir), Hingula or Rudrani (in Gujrat), Kalyani (in Kanou), Ambika (in the Deccan), Uma (in Mithila). In Bengal Bohar and Assam she is worshipped with unique eclat and pomp under the name of Durga ; and in Western India and Nepal the festival is known under the designation of Nabapatrika or Nabaratra. Thus this worship of the Mother has come to be recognised as India's national festival. Besides, its hoary anciency has been proclaimed in the holy scriptures of the Hindus—in the Vedas, in the Ramayana and the Mahabharat, in the Puranas and the Tantras. In the Veda she is called Apa (water), and as ' Apam Napat ' she is the mother of Skanda the Indian Hercules. She has further been delineated with all the wealth of love and detail in the scriptures of the Hindus under such names as Sabitri, Siddha, Sati, Sukeshi, Mohini and Uma or Gauri the lighted one of the heavenly mountain father Himalaya. For the Mother came down on earth at different times in different forms as a fulfilment of her sacred covenant with the humanity at large:

इदं यदा यदा बाधा दानवोत्था भविष्यति ।

तदा तदावतीर्याहं करिष्यामि अरिसिञ्चयम् ॥

"Whenever there shall be suffering of mankind on account of the predominance of demons, then shall I body myself forth on earth and annihilate them." Thus from age to age She incarnated herself to rescue and protect her children from the tyranny of the Asuras and has received the spontaneous homage of love and adoration from all her votaries.

The central fact about the Mother Durga is her signal triumph over the demon-king Mahishasura. The Indian mythology furnishes a glowing account of how the demon-king after a hundred years' grim fight with the gods inflicted a crushing defeat on Purandara the lord of heaven and wrested the celestial region from his hands,—how the gods in dire distress approached Vishnu with Brahma as their spokesman and the flaming energies that emanated from the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara) coalesced into the graceful form of the Mother Divine,—and how in a climacteric struggle she extirpated the whole host of the demons on the Mount Mandara and brought about the restoration of the gods to their long-lost position of freedom in heaven. The Puranas further tell us that it was through the worship of the Mother that the Kshatriya King Suratha—a helpless exile from his throne—regained his lost kingdom and in the next cycle of birth was raised to the exalted status of Savarni, and

that Samadhi the Vaishya was blessed with the highest state of spiritual illumination. Time has not even succeeded in dimming the epic grandeur that surrounds the heroic worship of the Divine Mother by Sri Ramachandra—one of the most fascinating figures in the history of the Indian race. With the roll of years this Shakti-worship inaugurated by him has received a universal recognition in India, for it has in it the noblest conception of the sacred ideal of womanhood based on the lofty idealism of the motherhood of God, and satisfies in a synthetic way the highest aspirations of the human soul. Ramachandra—though himself a divine incarnation—had even to seek the blessings of the Mother in his struggle with the Rakshasa King, Ravana of Ceylon, and prompted by an imperious necessity, had to celebrate the Durga Puja during the Dakshinayan (*i.e.*, The Southern Solstice), which is deemed in the scriptures as the period of rest and sleep for the Devas and as such the most inauspicious time in the year. For with the Hindus Uttarayana (*i.e.*, the Northern Solstice) is the only sacred and propitious season in the year when the gods remain awake and the religious festivals duly celebrated become productive of the desired result. But necessity has no law; and devotion and sincerity that stand far beyond the reach of Time's tyrannic claims bring their own deserts. Sita—the queen of India—was in bondage and was subjected to the groutest humiliation conceivable at the hands of Ravana who was a veritable incarnation of evil genius on earth. It was indeed a critical juncture in the life of the Indian nation. Never was such an insult offered to the womanhood of India nor such a tragic phenomenon witnessed in the history of the land. Verily, it was a struggle between the Good and the Evil. The Mother was therefore awakened from her cosmic slumber and worshipped with the wealth of love and devotion. The Mother was pleased and Ravana, the evil incarnate, received the highest retribution at the hands of Ramachandra for insulting in the person of Sita the whole womanhood of India. The evil was thus sacrificed at the altar of righteousness. This heroic worship of the Mother has since then been inextricably woven up with the entire fabric of India's religious life, and the Bodhan ceremony—the awakening of the Mother from her cosmic slumber—has also been considered as an indispensable part of the whole function; for without this the ceremony would be but a barren and sham performance.

The Tantras have declared in one voice that the transcendental Absolute—the Nirguna Brahman—is beyond the limitations of time, space and causation, *i.e.*, beyond all categories of existence. The universe we live in is but a divine manifestation of the same Eternal Reality

which as the boundless permanent *plenum* sustains and vitalises everything. Brahman is thus the infinite tranquil ocean on the surface of which countless varied modes like waves are rising and eventually losing themselves. Though It is the one cause of the universe of relations, in itself It is neither a relation nor a totality of relations but a completely relationless self-identity unknowable by any logical process whatever. The Tantras have thus admitted the reality of the universe of changing modes ; for it is the Chit (Brahman) that covering itself with the Mayashakti inherent in it has explicated into this world of varying experience. The one Shiva is both changeless in its static or transcendental aspect and the really changing Shiva-Shakti in its kinetic or immanent aspect. In terms of science the Supreme Reality can be likened to 'an equipotential surface of electric distribution. There is no difference of potentials between any two points over this surface in that state of equilibrium. To secure a flow on it there must be a difference of potentials between any two points'. Thus the polarisation of the Pure Consciousness into the world of changing phenomena is the work of the veiling power of the Mayashakti; but in the ultimate basis of experience which is Paramatman, the duality is altogether gone : for the same boundless substratum which is the continuous mass of experience is also that which is experienced. In short the Brahman in its manifested Energy is the Mother of the whole world of creation. "Every manifestation of power in the universe is Mother.....She is the sum-total of the energy in the universe. She is life, She is Intelligence, She is Love, She is in the universe, yet separate from it...The sea calm is the Absolute ; the same sea in waves is Divine Mother. The Divine Mother is the Kundalini sleeping in us: without worshipping Her we can never know ourselves." The sages thus dived deep into the heart of Being and visualized the same truth governing the functionings of both the worlds—the macrocosm and the microcosm. But when this Mother—the Divine Kundalini—lies dormant in us, the whole world (both external and internal), becomes a playground of evils and is riddled with the diabolical instincts of human nature. The sleeping Mother must therefore be roused from her slumber to get beyond the reign of malignant forces. Herein lies the spiritual significance of the awakening ceremony of the Mother before the actual commencement of the Puja. For Power is physical, psychic and spiritual, and in every man there is this 'Inner Woman'. Man, as the store-house of all power, is the master of his own destiny and is essentially one with the cosmic Power ; and the realisation of this identity is the supreme end of life. The Hindu's idea of worship is thus instinct with a deep spiritual import. The outward forms or images are but

the symbols—so many pegs to hang their spiritual ideas upon. The worship of the Mother in forms or images is only a worship of the divine potentiality that is within the man. Hence it is that the votary is to go through a process of self-purification, and silence the malignant forces in order to awaken the Mother within from her cosmic slumber. So goes the Mantram :

भूताः प्रेताः पिशाचाश्च ये वसन्त्यत्र भूतले ।

ते मृदन्तु मयादत्तो बलिर्गन्धः प्रसाधितः ॥

पूजिता गन्धगुण्यायै बलिभिस्तृप्तिस्तथा ।

देशादस्माद्भिनिःसृत्य पूजां पश्यन्तु मत्कृतां ॥

“O ye *Bhutas*, *Pretas* and *Pishachas* that inhabit the earth ! Ye that have been worshipped with flowers and incense ! Be pleased to accept the offering made unto you and leave this place and watch from a distance the worship conducted by me.” The demons referred to here are none other than the manifold evil passions and propensities which dwell in the human body, and disturb the calm equipoise of the soul. The stormy passions must therefore be charmed down to a sacred calm before the commencement of the worship of the Divine Mother. The Hindu seeks his Mother within, and the worship of the aspirant attains fruition in the ultimate realisation of his own identity with the Supreme Reality that in its static or transcendent aspect is Pure Consciousness (*Para Shiva*) and in its kinetic or immanent aspect is the Divine Mother (*Vimarsha Shakti*) evolving out into this world of changing experience. She is in fact the seat of infinite energy and the matrix of all creation and her worship alone leads to the emancipation of the human soul from its manifold bondages. So says the scripture: आगृहिता सैव वृणां भोगस्वर्गापवर्गा । “She being pleased, bestoweth wealth, heavenly joy and salvation on mankind.”

As in an individual life so also in the collective life of a people ; its moral or social disruption is due to its aberration from the true orbit of national idealism. Needless to say, the people of India have long forgotten the true significance of the worship of the Mother, and in consequence in every field of activity, social or political, there are today evident signs of moral apathy, and lack of healthy adventure and self-reliance. Every year the Goddess Durga is worshipped by the million souls of India and in that universal acclamation of joy, the painful memories of galling servitude, of poverty and oppression are drowned for a while. But it seems to be the mystery of all mysteries that the votaries of India, even after so many years of Mother-worship, have failed to earn that freedom and strength which are the proud possessions of every self-respecting nation in the world. India woefully lacks to-day that spirit of self-sacrifice and

heroism which is the very soul of all worship and without which no amount of pompous ceremonialism would be productive of any enduring result. The Indians must learn anew the deeper import of the Bodhan ceremony, and the collective life of the people must be held as a sacrifice at the altar of the Mother. For the Mother wants it to-day—her voice cries out over the teeming earth for lives, for the lives and blood of the heroic worshippers of Freedom. Like unto the King Suratha and Vaishya Samadhi, the blood of the heart must be offered to-day to propitiate the Mother. Time has indeed come when the children of the soil must rise to the radiance of spirit and cast off the sloughs of sloth and indolence, selfishness and jealousy and stand united before the Mother for a divine consecration of their soul. For then and then alone their worship would be acceptable unto the Mother and their feet shall tread on the road that ends with the temple of Liberation.

It is in India that the thought of the Mother has been realised in its completeness. The Bharat-Mata, the lighted daughter of the mountain-father Himalaya, stands as the living embodiment of Mother Divine. "As the Indian lad draws nearer to manhood," rightly says Sister Nivedita, "he realises that the father of the guest is no less than Himalayas and his daughter, there the spouse of God—according to the legend, Mother India herself." In fact it is not an idle speculation to conceive India as the Divine Mother herself. "Each race," as Sir John Woodroffe has pertinently put it, "both as the original typical imagination (Kalpana) and its materialisation is a particular form of the general Power (Shakti) who is the Mother of all. To the Hindu, India is thus in a literal and not merely figurative sense the Mother and the object of worship, that is God appearing as India. Therefore true service of Her is worship of Him." The Indians have therefore for countless ages worshipped the Bharat-Mata as the living representative of the motherhood of God and as the perennial source of infinite strength and wisdom. For 'this is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, the same India whose influx of spirituality is represented, as it were, on the material plane, by rolling rivers like oceans, where the eternal Himalayas rising tier above tier with their snow-caps look, as it were, into the very mysteries of heaven. Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first sprang up enquiries into the nature of man, and into the internal world. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and here the highest ideals of religion and philosophy have attained their culminating points.' This is indeed the land whose every hill and dale still rings with mar

vollous exploits of uncommon heroism and whose boundless wealth has fed and nourished the countless races of the outside world. But to-day India—our Mother—stands a despicable beggar shorn of all her pristine glory and with a begging bowl in hand before the door of humanity for the barest necessities of life!

To crown all, the women of India who have been looked upon in this country as the living representatives of the motherhood of God have been reduced to dumb inarticulate frightened creatures, afraid of God's light and air, afraid of their own voices and unable even to walk! With the rocrudescence of hooliganism in the land they have become the helpless instruments in the hands of ruffians for the satisfaction of the libidinous instincts of human nature. They have moreover been made to bear the eternal brand of inferiority throughout their life in society and every healthy opportunity has been denied to them for the cultivation of a spirit of sturdy courage both physical and moral, of self-confidence and self-help. The angle of vision must therefore be altogether changed. The sacred idealism that guided all our relations with them must be rejuvenated if we indeed aspire to see our land free and virile in all the spheres of its activity. We must learn to look upon them as the embodiment of Divine Energy—of all that is holy and pure. Needless to say, the worship of the Mother that does not take cognisance of the divinity and the vital interests of the womanhood of the nation and fails to inspire the votary with undaunted heroism to fight the diabolism of the eternal enemies of mankind is nothing but a shameful mockery of worship. The sanctity of the life of womanhood has been ignored and the society has, to our shame, been trying in no small measure to stifle even the legitimate aspirations of our woman-folk! It is not too much to say that the future of India depends largely upon the emancipation of our women from the tentacles of worn-out traditions of our social life. They must be made self-conscious beings capable of tackling their own problems and furnishing the country with a new fund of energy and intelligence in its struggle for liberation. They must be treated with all the respect and veneration due to them; for it is they who would diffuse strength and purity in the society and maintain the integrity of our social organism.

Rightly did Swami Vivekananda point out in one of his epistles: "Why is it that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries?—Because Shakti is held in dishonour there. Without the grace of the Shakti nothing is to be accomplished. What do I find in America and Europe?—The worship of Shakti, the worship of Power. Yet they worship Her ignorantly through sense gratification,

Imagine, then, what a lot of good they will achieve who will worship Her with all purity, in a Sattvika spirit, looking upon Her as their mother.....In Roman Catholic religion Jehova, or Jesus or the trinity is secondary; there, the worship is for the Mother,—She the Mother with Child Jesus in Her arms. The emperor cries 'Mother,' the field-marshal cries 'Mother,' the soldier with flag in his hand cries 'Mother,' the seaman at the helm cries 'Mother,' the fisherman in his rags cries 'Mother'. The beggar in the street cries 'Mother.' A million voices, in a million ways, from a million places, from the palace, from the cottage, from the church, cry, 'Mother,' 'Mother', 'Mother'. Everywhere is the cry 'Ave Maria,' day and night, 'Ave Maria,' 'Ave Maria.'.....Our Shakti Puja is only in the holy places, and at certain times only it is performed; but theirs it is in every place and always for days, weeks, months and years." The history of human culture tells us in unmistakable terms how the Moors first sowed the seeds of Western civilisation and introduced the ideal of Shakti-worship into the heart of Europe and how with the roll of time they themselves stultified their own lofty idealism and their power and civilisation passed over to Europe, and the 'Mother smiled her blessings' on the Christians. This is indeed the case with the Indians to day. It was in India that the Shakti worship reached its highest culmination. But the old India is now merely a dream. The vestiges of its pristine glory are found in the Ramayana and the Mahabharat and in the remnants of the scientific literature that survived the furies of raid and conquest; traces of it are met with in the literature of other people!

But every cloud has its silver-lining. Not many years back, Sri Ramakrishna, the holy saint of Dakshineswar, demonstrated to the self-hypnotised people of India the sublime ideal of Mother-worship. In his unique personality all the varied aspects of India's life of wisdom and culture were blended in a beautiful synthesis. He pointed out the very soul of Indian culture and the line of its evolution. In fact the Mother-Power of India's collective life was re-awakened in him, and in this age of materialism when the angle of vision has been vitiated by lust and gold, when the values of life have come to be judged by the paltry standard of money-profits, his life of renunciation and realisation came as a wonderful revelation and gave a rude shock to the self-forgetful humanity. His life as such stands as an eloquent interpretation of the cultural genius of India. It was this unlettered saint of Dakshineswar who has, for the first time in this dark age of materialism, worshipped his own consort as the living embodiment of the Mother Divine and opened the human vision to the innate divinity of all alike and thereby spiritualised the relation between man and woman. For divinity is not the exclusive monopoly of man alone. The

same Supreme Reality resides in all from the highest to the lowliest of creation. He visualised the Mother in his consort and offered worship at her feet with the fulness of devotion and love. In fact his life-long Sadhana was a silent consecration of the souls of India at the altar of the Mother. If India is again to rise to the full stature of her nationhood and take her proud position of honour in the vanguard of nations, she must follow the ideal of Mother-worship which the God-man of Dakshineswar has demonstrated in his unostentatious life. Time has come when we must strive to realise the greatness of our cultural being and tread the path which the saints and heroes of the past and present have shown us in their lives. What is wanted is the sublimation of all our conceptions to the lofty idealism that has guided all our activities in the process of our national evolution. The supreme moment for the worship of the Mother is fast approaching. And in this dim twilight of India's life let million hearts of India beat in unison to the one cosmic tune of love and cordiality ; let all distinctions between the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the touchable and the untouchable, be wiped off once for all. For it is only with a heart purged of all its impurities that the Mother is to be worshipped. Let us therefore seek refuge at her feet and offer with all humility our united prayer unto her ; for she is the bestower of Divine Peace and Liberation—the cherished goal of all human aspiration :

“ नमस्तेऽशरण्ये शिवे सावकुम्भे नमस्ते जगदव्यापिके विश्वरूपे ।

नमस्ते जगद्गन्धपादागन्धिन्दे नमस्ते जगत्तारिणि वाहि दुर्गे ॥ ”

“ त्वं वैष्णवी शक्तिरनन्तवीर्या विश्वस्य वीजं परमाणि माया ।

संमोहितं देवि ममस्तमेतत् त्वं वै प्रपन्ना भुवि मुक्तिहेतुः ॥

देवि प्रपन्नातिहरे प्रसीद प्रसीद मातर्जगतोऽखिलस्य ।

प्रसीद विश्वेश्वरि पाहि विश्वं त्वमीश्वरी देवि चराचरस्य ॥ ”

“ O Goddess Durga! Thou Who art Ever-blessful, Ever-compassionate, Thou Who pervadest the whole universe and assumeth the universal form ; to Thee my salutations. Thou whose lotus feet the universe worshippeth, Thou Who art the Liberator of the universe itself, to Thee my salutations. Thou, Eternal Refuge ! I seek refuge in Thee.”

“ O Mother ! Thou art the great Primal Energy, the seat of infinite strength ; Thou art the seed of the world and illusion Divine ; Thou hast enchanted the whole universe, O Goddess Supreme, by Thy deluding charms, and Thyself bestowest salvation in the world when propitious !

O Goddess ! Thou Destroyer of troubles of Thy refugees, and the Mother of the universe, Thy mercy be upon all ! O Mother, Thou Mistress of the world, and Guardian, Thou one Ruler of the movable and the immovables, Thy grace be showered upon all !"

OM SHANTIH ! SHANTIH ! SHANTIH !

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN INDIAN HISTORY

(Continued from the last Issue)

By Swami Ghanananda

IV

Buddhism—Its Assimilative and Democratising work

The priests asserted themselves again after Sri Krishna, and though the spiritual equality of all souls was in a way recognised, social equality still remained to be sufficiently admitted. And the problem was again solved by Bhagawan Buddha* who like Krishna hailed from the Kshatriya community. He preached in the language of the people the most popular religion in the world of his days, extending the arms of love and compassion to one and all, and admitted members into his fold, lay or monastic, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or even sex. History tells us of the universal spread of Buddhism. It was disseminated not only in India, Burma and Ceylon, but also in Java, Bally, Siam, Sumatra, Borneo, to China, Tibet and Japan, to Siberia, Eastern and Western Russia, to Europe and Africa. Nay it crossed the Pacific ocean and spread beyond the distant shores of far-off America, if we can rely on the inferences that may be drawn from recent archaeological researches in Mexico.

But the assimilative and democratising work of Buddhism went too far as can be inferred from the history of the religion in its later form. In its missionary zeal to absorb all elements into its fold, it admitted all sorts of heterogeneous tribes and races who brought in their diabolical customs and degraded ways of life and who therefore were beyond all hope of elevation and purification. This was the main cause of the downfall of Buddhism. The assimilative power of the religion was exercised far beyond the limits of perfect recovery.

Sankara and other Acharyas

Then came Sankara[†] who purged the country by preaching the old Vedic religion divested of all accretions that had gathered round it with the efflux of time. He had to be conservative for preserving the faith. It was a reparation, as it were, for the mistakes of

* 623—543 B.C.

† 8th century A. D.

Buddhism committed in absorbing all alien elements which corrupted its church. With the conservative note in Sankara, there came again Adhikaravada and social and spiritual exclusiveness.

Sankara was one of the greatest spiritual geniuses the world has ever seen and is second perhaps only to Sri Krishna in sheer intellectual power in the whole history of Hinduism. His Adwaita-Vedanta presents the most logical and rational approach to religion and none can aspire to improve upon it. His monistic teachings brought the whole of India under the banner of the ancient Vedic faith. But the Adwaita is a difficult system to understand. Even today it is not all that can comprehend it and it is only the choice and favoured few that are competent to practise it in spiritual life as a form of Sadhana. There was, therefore, a great need for reaching the Vedic truths in forms easily intelligible to the masses. This was done admirably by the Acharyas Ramanuja and Madhya who followed. Ramanuja* preached the Visishtadwaita form of Hindu religion and philosophy and brought the masses more securely within the Vedic fold of the Vedic Hinduism. His preaching of Bhakti, appeal to the emotions, denial of birth-rights before spiritual attainments, teaching through the popular tongue, and the expounding of a popular philosophy all contributed to the success of his task. The heart of Ramanuja was almost as broad as that of Buddha. He was so compassionate and anxious for the spiritual welfare of even the lowest castes that he readily proclaimed the Vaishnava Mantram from the top of the pagoda of the temple at Conjevaram, in spite of the injunction of his Guru against doing so. Vaishnavism in the South of India can boast of the Alvars some of whom hailed from very low classes. This democratising spirit in Hinduism expressed itself also in the work of Madhvacharya who taught religion in its simplest form of Bhakti through his Dwaita or dualism, which could be easily grasped even by the most illiterate and lowest classes.

Synthesis of Hinduism and Islam—Kabir and Nanak

The work of Kabir and Nanak again testifies to the assimilative power of Hinduism. They were born at a time when Hinduism had to stand the onslaught of Islam and check its power to proselytise the masses. The spirit of the age produced these saints who came as harbingers of peace and amity among the Hindus and Mohammedans, and of reconciliation and harmony among their creeds. Kabir who is considered to be a Mohammedan weaver by birth, took his initiation from Ramananda, a Brahmana Vaishnava Sannyasin

* Lived at the close of the 11th and in the first half of the 12th century A.D.

of the fourteenth century, and preached a synthetic religion, proclaiming the essential unity of Islam and Hinduism by thier life and thought. Kabir sang—

“O God, whether Allah or Ram, I live by Thy name,

O Lord, show kindness unto me.

Hari dwolleth in the south, Allah hath His place in the west.

Search in thy heart, search in the heart of hearts ; *there* is His peace and abode.”

And Guru Nanak* too preached the same synthetic religion. He proclaimed, “He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just and he only is a good Mohammedan whose life is pure. Be true and thou shall be free. . . . God will not ask man of what race he is. He will ask what he has done.” He taught, “Love the saints of every faith. Put away your pride. Remember, the essence of religion is meekness and sympathy.” He looked upon the differences between a Muslim and a Hindu as a myth and treated them both as the children of God. He said, “To him the delusion of whose heart is gone, Hindus and Mussalmans are the same.”

Chaitanya and Vaishnavism

The capacity of Hinduism to absorb an alien religion or race is best illustrated by the great movement of Chaitanya or Sri Gauranga. He preached the cult of pure Bhakti or Love for Love's sake and soon became a tremendous power in the Hindu fold in the north-east. He was able to create such exalted fervour and spiritual enthusiasm wherever he went that all obstacles to the spread of the movement gave way before him, and the people of all sects embraced his faith. Even the Mahomedans in Bengal who were deeply moved by his preaching and personality became his followers. His religion could count amongst its saints and singers literary men who have left records of Vaishnava writings in prose and verse. Recent researches in mediaeval Bengali literature have yielded as many as forty-five names of the Mahomedan mystics who composed songs on Radha and Krishna. In the *Venya Sahitya Parichaya*, Rai Sahib Danish Chandra Sen's great work, the names of eleven Mohomedan poets are given together with a few representative poems of each. They are Alwal, Salweg, Kubir, Sekhlal, Fatan, Bhikan, Ali Raja, Akbar Shah, Nasir Mahmud, Habib and Syod Martuza. The last named was born in the middle of the sixteenth century in a village in the district of Murshidabad in Bengal, and died at the age of eighty

at a place called Chhapghati where his tomb still exists and is venerated by Hindus and Muslims alike. It seems there was another Syed Martuza who was also a Vaishnava poet. Ali Raja translated *Siraj-Kulup*, a Persian work into Bengali, and also published an original work named the *Dhyanamala* besides numerous Vaishnava poems. Alwal composed a great work named the *Pudma-rat*.

The *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* by Krishnadas Kaviraj, composed between 1615 and 1616 A. D., gives the reader an account of the great Mohammedan Vaishnava Saint Hari Das. He hailed from a village in the district of Jessore in Bengal. Prof. S. N. Dhar, M.A., of the Holkar College, Indore, in the course of an article depicting the deep influence of Chaitanya and his movement on the Muslims in Mediaeval Bengal which appeared in the United India and Indian States says: "It appears that Chaitanya who enjoined on all men faith in Hari and the uttering of His name, did never regard a Mohammedan as impure or inferior, nor did he revile the great religion of Islam. In the memorable interview between the two men on the sea-beach at Puri Hari Das who had come all the way from Bengal to have a *darsan* of the Master fell weeping at his feet, saying that he was an impure Muslim and so doomed for ever. The great saint lovingly embraced Hari Das and praised his spiritual yearning, but gave him a mild rebuke in the following words: 'for nothing you deery yourself, Hari Das, and your religion. I myself do not possess the purity of your pure religion.'

"This great Mohammedan Vaishnava died at Puri, enjoying upto the very last moment, when breath actually failed him, the supreme felicity of having his Master, and his followers before his closing eyes. Then rose Chaitanya and carrying the corpse of Hari Das, began singing and dancing in divine ecstacy. This continued for some time when Swarup Gosain brought Chaitanya back to his senses. They carried the coffin to the sea, and bathed it in its water. 'The sea has now become a Tirtha,' said Chaitanya. They then dipped his (Hari Das's toe in water, which they drank with great respect. They besmeared his body with sandal-paste and wrapped it in costly clothes. His grave was dug in the beach, the corpse was placed in it, and Chaitanya filled it with sand with his own hands. Such was the honour and love inspired by a great Mohammedan Vaishnava."

Hardly inferior to Hari Das in reputation among the Vaishnavas and greater than he in their influence on the moulding of the dogmas of Vaishnavism were the remarkable brothers Dabir and Khas, two (converted) Mohammedan ministers of the King of Bengal.

As Rup and Sanatan the great Gosains, as they were styled, they became the most important figures in Vaishnava Society, after the demise of the Master. They spread his teachings and composed books in Sanskrit and Bengali, a list of which is given in the *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* and which are still read daily by pious Vaishnavas. Sanatan regulated the conduct of the Vaishnavas and explained the cardinal principles of Vaishnavism in a great work called *Hari-Bhaktivilas*. Rup was a poet and scholar and composed two mystic dramas in Sanskrit, named the *Lalita-Madhavam* and the *Vidagdha-Madhavam*, which are based on the amours of Radha and Krishna. His other works are the *Ujjwala-Nilamani*, *Dana Kelikaumudi*, etc.

Expansion of Religion and Greater India

In the spread of India's culture and civilisation into far-off lands beyond the seas, which resulted in what has been fittingly called "Greater India," religion played no part. The beginnings of this cultural empire can be traced to a time long before the advent of Buddhism. Even before the birth of Buddha the Vedic religion peacefully penetrated into Siam, Cambodia, Champa, Java, Bali and other countries and islands of the East through adventurous Brahmanas, merchants and soldiers who crossed the seas and founded small colonies which were pre-eminently centres of culture. In some places like Champa, the colonists conquered the aborigines and became their rulers. But this political conquest is of far less importance than the conquest of culture which was made wherever the Indians went. Says Prof. Jadunath Sircar, "Everywhere they carried, propagated and imposed, with their Brahmanic religion and respect for the higher caste,—manners, ideas, usages, rites and institutions of India,—her alphabets, literature and classical Sanskrit language. It is true that the oldest epigraphic document as yet discovered in Indo-China which is in pure classical Sanskrit, does not go beyond the 3rd century after Christ. But the slow work of colonisation and civilisation which preceded that brilliant period of Indian culture could have begun only 8 to 10 centuries, probably more earlier, and had already attained to a full expansion in the 4th century B.C." During the days of Buddhism this cultural expansion was extended and India came to be recognised as the greatest spiritual teacher in the world. The messengers of religious culture from India were every where held in the highest esteem. "Two Indian monks, Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna were the first to go to China and to translate Buddhist texts some of which are still preserved in Chinese. And for these two early Indian monks there was built the first Buddhist monastery called Po-ma-sse, 'the white horse monastery' which played a great part in the history of Buddhism in China."

V

Hinduism : An Inextinguishable Light

Even from very ancient times, several saints and prophets have been appearing in India, each adding a link to the long and unbroken chain of religious life in the country. This takes us to another lesson which we can learn from Indian history, viz., that religious culture is kept alive in spite of political subjection and bondage—that the light of India's spirituality could not be extinguished even by the strongest storms the country had to face. Scores of spiritual luminaries came from time to time in different parts of the country to revivify and resuscitate the cultural and religious consciousness of the land, whenever there was need for doing so. Their lives and teachings have been embodiments of one or more aspects of Hinduism so that when taken in toto they present to us the Sadhanas (spiritual practices) inculcated by the religion to suit a variety of temperaments in a variety of ways. This gives Hinduism an all-comprehensiveness and width, a catholicity and perfection, a synthetic and conciliatory note, possessed by no other religion. The teachings of the several saints contain truths and principles which may appear to contradict one another, but studied in the light of the all-embracing and universal Vedanta, they yield us a rich commentary on the Sanatana Dharma or Eternal Religion of the Hindus in all its phases—a grand and sublime harmony of different notes and scales from the lowest to the highest. They represent the different stages and aspects of the development of the Indian religious consciousness. Sri Krishna and Buddha; Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhava; Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir and Guru Govind; Tukaram, and Ramdas; Vidyaranya and others too numerous to mention—all these make India's brightest galaxy of saints and teachers, which is beyond all compare.

VI

Religious Revival : A Precursor of Nationalism

As religion has been the root of the tree of national life in India, the teachings of the saints who arose in different parts of the country, besides fulfilling the spiritual needs of the people in different times, vitalised their national consciousness as well and paved the way for a national rise and regeneration. This, then, is yet another lesson of the religious history of our land. Even in the very ancient times, the national life emanated and followed from the centres of spiritual and cultural thought. The blood of India circulated in and through the heart of the colleges of sages and abodes of spiritual teachers down to the net-work of veins and arteries that formed the country's collective life. It was in this way that the Samities of the Panchalas, of the Kashyas (Benares) and of the Maithilas which stood out as great

centres of spiritual culture and philosophy, became in turn the foci of political ambition of the various divisions of the Aryans.

The great empire that arose in the days of the glory of Buddhism also tells the same story of the revival of nationalism and the creation of political unity after a great religious upheaval. In about two hundred years after Buddha's advent, there arose the great Mauryan Empire which could boast of an Asoka, one of the greatest emperors the world has ever seen or can ever hope to produce.

After the glories of Buddhism had faded away and the empires of Pataliputra and Magadha were gone, we again find that "a renaissance India bought by the valour and blood of the heroic Rajputs, defined by the merciless intellect of a Brahmana from the same historical thought centre of Mithila, led by a new philosophical impulse organised by Sankara and his bands of Sannyasins and beautified by the arts and literature of the courts of Malava—arose on the ruins of the old".

In the south, the spiritual upheaval of Sankara and Ramanuja was followed by the sequence of united races and powerful empires.

The Mohammedans attempted for centuries to subjugate the south, but can scarcely be said to have got a strong foothold. The instinct of self-preservation asserted itself in the religious literature of Tukaram and Ramdas. And with the consequent awakening that followed, the plateaus of the south poured their bands of fighting peasant horsemen under the leadership of Sivaji, all resolved to die for the religion Ramadas preached and Tuka sang.

In the north, there arose the great and powerful prophet Guru Govind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru of the line of Guru Nanak. His spiritual work resulted in the strong political organisation of the Sikhs, which crushed the Mohammedan power that was proving a menace to the Hindus of upper India.

We see, therefore, that the different religious movements in India not only serve a spiritual purpose by ministering to the religious needs of the people but also greatly contributed to the organising of the scattered forces in collective thought and life, welding them all into one single power for bringing about political unity and solidarity among the people, making way for the establishment of kingdoms and empires. Religious movements have the power to conserve the entire energy of the nation and after a time this energy is expressed in rich national activities. This was what happened in Mediaeval Europe. It is not too much to say that the Europe of the Renaissance and the Reformation were already in the womb of the Mediaeval period. Dur-

ing the Middle Ages, Christianity with its saints, sages and ascetics directed the mind of the whole Continent towards a spiritual ideal and thereby conserved the energy of the whole of Christendom. And when the spiritual tension was released and the national mind came down to the normal, this stored-up energy manifested itself in the glorious Renaissance and Reformation of whose achievements the West is justly proud.

Three Types of Religious Movements

The religious movements which we have dealt with can be divided into three classes—those which are purely spiritual, those which are assimilative and checkmating, and those which are political and military.

The movements of Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva were purely spiritual. They were ushered in by these founders to preach religion in different forms suited to the requirements of the times. The movement of Buddha was a world-wide one having its adherents throughout the then known world. Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva—all these preached the Vedic religion, bringing India under the banner of the Vedanta. It is well-known that literature, arts and other glories of culture and civilisation followed in the wake of these movements.

But the movements of Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and Dadu were more or less assimilative or checkmating. They stemmed the tide of Islam and checked its rapid conquest among the masses. They all preached the equality of man and the unity of God, however much they differed in philosophy. Kabir and Nanak preached a religion which was a definite synthesis of Islam and Hinduism. They not only succeeded in keeping the masses within the fold but also tempered the fanaticism of the Mohammedans. Chaitanya's movement was rather deeper and stronger. It possessed great creative power and preached devotion for devotion's sake. Ramanuja and Madhva also preached Bhakti but it was tempered with Jnana. Chaitanya's simple creed of love pure and simple had a potent influence on Hindus and Muslims alike.

In the Sikh movement of Guru Govind, we have an instance of a political organisation backed up by spiritual vigour and energy. This reactionary impulse was a necessity of the times. The Mahratta power which arose when the Deccan stood in need of protection from the Mohammedans received similar impetus from a spiritual awakening.

The influence of profoundly spiritual movements is always far-reaching and powerful. They are fruitful of permanent results. They

have inspired painting, music, architecture, sculpture and literature. The Court of Vikramaditya is well-known for its culture. His age was the golden age in Sanskrit literature. The impetus of religion accounts also for the brilliance of the courts of Malava and Vijayanagar. But, on the other hand, we don't find in Poona or Lahore a ray of the intellectual, artistic or cultural glory that surrounded the other courts. The meteoric empires of the Maharattas and the Sikhs represented partly the mass fanaticism and lost all their motive power as soon as they had succeeded in destroying the rule of the hated Muslims.

VII

Interaction of Religions : Hinduism and Islam

As already mentioned, the Greek, Scythian, Mongolian and Parthian invaders who preceded the Mohammedans became completely aryanised in religion and social customs and manners, in name, in speech and in dress. But Islam being "a fiercely monotheistic religion," did not "allow any compromise with polytheism or admit a plurality of deities." As Prof. Jadunath Sircar rightly observes, "The God of Islam and of Christianity—like the God of Judaism, which was the parent of both these creeds,—is 'a living and a jealous God'. He cannot tolerate any companion or sharer in the hearts of His adorers. Hence, the absorption of the Indo-Muslims into the fold of Hinduism by recognising Allah as another of the numberless incarnations of Vishnu and Mohammed as an inspired Sadhu, was impossible. Therefore, Hindus and Mohammedans,—as, later on, Hindus and Christians,—had to live in the same land without being able to mix together. Nothing has enabled them to bridge this gulf. The Indian Muslims have, throughout the succeeding centuries, retained the extra Indian direction of their hearts. Their faces are still turned, in daily prayer, to a spot in Mecca; their minds, their law-code, their administrative system, their favourite reading sought models from outside India,—from Arabia and Syria, Persia and Egypt. All Mohammedans have the same sacred language, era, literature, teachers, saints and shrines, throughout the world, instead of these being restricted to India, as is the case with the Hindus." The Hindus were willing and ready to absorb the Muslims. They made peace with them. They recognised Allah as an aspect of the Godhead in the *Allopanishad* and adored Him. They loved Akbar and other good and great Mohammedan kings. But all the same, Islam remained a distinct religion, unassimilated and unassimilable. And to-day it is the religion of nearly one-fifth of India.

The contribution of Islam to Indian national life has been by no means little. Its greatest gift has been its democratic spirit and its

practicality. It exercised a powerful influence on Hindu society whose inherent spirit of equality was roused, and expressed in movements like those of Ramananda, Kabir and Dadu, Nanak and Chaitanya. All these religious reformers preached the equality of all souls before God, and admitted all classes of people into their folds by doing away with minor differences in ritual, dogma and other externals.

One of the finest fruits of the contact of Islam with Vedanta was Sufism. With its characteristic synthetic outlook, it brought the higher classes of both the religions closer together. As the late Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, the founder of the Sufi movement in the West says, "the Sufi thinks that we all follow one religion only in different names and different forms." Sufism represented the "Mingling of the two oceans"—the confluence of Hinduism and Mohammedanism and naturally helped in removing bigotry and fanaticism.

VIII

Conclusion : The Music of Indian Nationalism

Spirituality has been the dominating note in the music of Indian national life in the past, whereas it is politics or commerce in the countries of the West. An ideal state according to the Hindu conception is one in which the king is but a servant of the people and protects the Dharma of the land—the Dharma of all classes and castes. In the Varnashrama system which is a characteristic product of the Hindu genius, the keynote has been national service, each member of the polity living a life of duties and responsibilities according to his Dharma, with a view to attain the summum bonum. He would joyously exclaim:

"Hail, social life! into thy pleasing bounds
Again I come to pay the common stock,
My share of service, and, in glad return
To taste the comforts, thy protected joys."

How different Indian nationalism is from the aggressive nationalism of the Western type with its evils of self-aggrandisement at the cost of other nations and its glorification of materialism! The cultural *Samskaras* left by the national life in the past on India's mind have been so strong and deep-rooted that they cannot be altered and much less destroyed. This is the greatest legacy of India's past to her children; for, does not the future India remain in embryonic form in these *Samskaras*, which constitute what Sir John Woodroffe would call the "Seed of the Race"?

(Concluded)

THE DISPUTANT DIVINE

By A. Srinivasachariar, B.A., L.T.

In this world of diversity, differences are so pronounced and obvious that their recognition by human minds may be said to be an easy and even instinctive phenomenon ; whereas the unity underlying diversity is so subtle, deep and confined within layers upon layers of opaque matter, that its existence is beyond the ken of uncultured minds, and its perception is verily an achievement worthy of a great genius. It is perhaps this fundamental truth that is at the bottom of the endless disputes that arise on all sides in individual, social, national and international life. Such disputes, however inevitable, are felt to be veritable sources of discord, unrest and unhappiness by one and all, and are often sought to be settled by the method of arbitration, the judge's decision being final and binding on the parties. Sometimes in the absence of an arbitrator, when one of the contestants feels keenly the rank injustice on the opponent's side as well as the unquestionable truth of the cause for which he stands, one is often tempted to vindicate the cause by resorting to swearing; and then the opponent, painfully alive to the stings of his conscience, bows down to the supreme authority that is implied in the use of the divine name. Such is the prevailing custom in litigation pertaining to mundane life. But does the spirit of disputation rear its naughty head in the spiritual world too ? A great poet and devotee imagines that there is litigation in the spiritual planes of existence also and that the Lord of the universe out of love condescends to figure as a disputant and involves Himself in a suit for establishing His claims, unwilling to exercise His invincible might, where persuasion by love would lead to the voluntary acknowledgment of His divine right and joyous submission to the same.

The Vaishnavite poet-devotee referred to was a pet child of the Lord (of Srirangam, a famous Vaishnavite centre rich in its association with eminent devotees of Narayana), specially favoured by divine grace from his very birth. Pious parentage, holy environment, contact with a mighty incarnation and the benediction spontaneously shed by spiritual perfection, and also inherent sterling merit—each had contributed its unwonted share towards the moulding of his spiritual genius. It was not only in an atmosphere of devotion and spirituality that he was born and bred up ; but also a cultural atmosphere quivering under the stimulus of a briskly awakening life brooded over him and quickly developed the gigantic intellect in embryo that was struggling for emergence. His devotion ripened into maturity and he consecrated all the wealth of his intelligence towards the enriching of

the existing devotional lore in several ways. The holy wedlock between the devotional and the intellectual elements in him, in which the latter was allowed to play only a subservient feminine part, resulted in the creation of exquisite poems replete with original conceptions of a very high order and instinct with deep devotional fervour. Of him it might be said that 'there was nothing that he touched that he did not adorn.' Treading the path of self-surrender to the Lord the devotee travelled on and on, borne on the wings of divine grace, until he reached the summits of spiritual realization. There often his mind was overwhelmed by the flood of ecstasy which transported him to the ethereal regions of love and illumination; there he saw vividly man in reality as a passive witness whom the unconditional infinite grace of God was elevating steadily towards His own abode of pure and perpetual bliss. There he realized that man's endeavour availed nothing and the Lord's was everything and that egoistic self-effort culminated only in the annihilation of egoism and self-effort that led men away from God. Often he looked down from the dizzy heights he had attained, on the valleys where his poor and unfortunate brethren, unmindful of the glorious divine heritage awaiting them, were groping in darkness and grovelling in the quagmire of sensualism; and his heart was overpowered by compassion. It appeared as if they were wilfully rejecting the proffered divine aid that unsought was seeking them for their own upliftment, and were preferring to follow blindly where their impulses born of conceit and ignorance guided them. The more he pondered on the Lord's ministrations to mortals in infinite ways prompted by divine mercies, the more perverse seemed their behaviour of persistently setting their faces against Him. "Is man at warfare with the Lord?" thought the devotee, and the idea entered deep into his heart and stirred up the very depths of his emotional nature.

One day the same poet, Sri Parasara Bhatta by name, (at the age of four, according to tradition) was present during the worship of the Great Lord in the temple of Srirangam. The Lord's image, His very flesh and blood in the eyes of his true devotees, was prepared for the bath that was to follow. The Lord wore only one waist cloth without any upper garment, and a solitary garland of flowers over his shoulders. The holy waters were poured over his body amidst chantings of devotional hymns in Tamil and Sanskrit; and His cloth was dripping. The young poet who was feasting his eyes and mind on the scene and on its spiritual implications was in a blissful and contemplative mood. Perhaps there was something unusual in the spiritual glow on his face, which attracted the attention of some old Vaishnavite devotees on the spot to such an extent, that with a view to participate in the

inward raptures they ventured to approach him with the request to favour them with an apt description of the holy scene that held his mind captive. The responso was in the form of a short poem pregnant with meaning :

त्वमेऽहमे कुतस्तत् तदपि कुतः इदं वेदमूलप्रमाणात्
एतच्चानादिसिद्धादनुभवविभवात् सोपि साक्रोश एव
क्राक्रोशः कस्य गीतादिषु मम विदितः कोऽत्रसाक्षी सुधीरस्यात्
हन्त त्वत्पक्षपाती स इति नृकलहे मृग्य मथ्यस्यवत् त्वाम्॥

The scene reminded the poet of the condition of the plaintiff in a suit who, unable to defend his just case by the strength of his documents, evidence and arguments, desperately resorts to the method of winning his cause by swearing with due solemnity. (The custom on such occasions for the swearer is to plunge into water with only a waist cloth on and come out of the water dripping, to put on a garland of flowers and to declare his oath.) The poet's eye was "in a fine frenzy rolling" and the thought flashed across his mind that the bathing scene symbolised the Lord's preparedness to swear for the purpose of claiming His rebel child. His rich poetic imagination painted on the canvass of his mind the following picture of an altercation between God and man:

The Lord Supreme stood in front of man and said, 'Thou art mine.' Even the most impertinent urchin, when some one declares to his face 'You are my servant', would retort with the words 'You are my servant', with an emphasis on 'you'; and the Lord might therefore expect at least a defiant tit-for-tat response, in the form 'thou art mine'. Oh! the raptures God would be in if His darling child in his mischievous stubbornness had exclaimed so, and out of sheer wilfulness proceeded to act likewise! But man, the vile wretch that he is, the rebellious child of God, gave forth the shocking reply, "I am mine." Amazed at this, God questioned him, "How is that?" But man undaunted repeated the question "How is that (which you said)?" The Lord replied, "My claim is supported by the Vedas and other Scriptures of divine origin." (The Scriptures say that the individual soul is the eternal property of the Lord, and that the Ishwara and the Jiva are ever related as master and servant, as father and son, as husband and wife and so forth in a spiritual sense.) "Yours is only documentary support," retorted man, "but my claim is supported by my enjoyment from time out of mind; my possession from the very dawn of creation would testify to my statement." (Man, ever since his fall, ever since he began to feel himself as a separate individuality torn away from the existence of God, has been incessantly pandering to his lower self under the

presumption that he, the ego, exists only for the gratification of the lower self), and continued, "Even if it be conceded that documents favour Your claim, inasmuch as my possession for an unbroken period of centuries has never been questioned by You, Your claim is barred by limitation." "Not so at all," rejoined the Lord, "frequently has your enjoyment been contended against, ever since you began to usurp My possession. Again, My claim arising as it does before time came into existence, and being eternal, finite time however long hath no power over it, and thus My claim is eternally true and valid." The Jiva could not bear this remark and questioned the Lord immediately, "How is that, Lord? Has my right of enjoyment ever been disputed? If so, where, when and by whom was the objection raised?" The Lord replied, "In the Gita and other works I have questioned your rights, nay, denied them and have put forward My claims in all reasonableness and supported them by records whose validity you cannot impeach. My objections have been proclaimed far and wide, even in the midst of armies awfully arrayed for a tremendous fight." "But who will bear witness, my Lord, to Your allegations? Can You adduce any reliable evidence to support them?" "Certainly," the Lord replied in exulting tones, "Sri Vyasa, the great Bhishma and other men of divine wisdom shall bear testimony." "But, alas! such men of wisdom are notorious for their partiality towards Thee; for hast Thou not said in the Gita, 'As for men of divine wisdom, they are verily My own self'? Such interested witnesses side You naturally, and no wonder; I place little faith in their words." The Lord did not proceed further, knowing it to be vain; nor did He seek an arbitrator, for in this dispute between Ishwara and Jiva, between God and man, who is there that can be a mediator,—one, neither a Jiva nor Ishwara?

The poet concluded his poem thus:—"Dost Thou, sweet Lord, in the impossibility of getting an arbitrator, think it advisable to establish Thy claim by going to the length of swearing, and thereby redeem and reclaim Thy lost child, man? Verily, Thy dripping waist cloth and Thy garland make Thee appear as one prepared to swear on behalf of one's claims."

The poet was right and voiced forth only the truth of things with characteristic insight and in profound devotional symbology. The conception of a dispute between God and man is not entirely the work of imagination, but has its roots deep into the world of human experience and stern realities. Breathes there a sadhaka, (one who practises the means enjoined by the shastras and the guru for attaining salvation) that has not felt often the ignoble strife between the brute and the Divine in him? Is not the flesh ever at

war with the spirit in man? Does not the unripe untutored ego of the ignorant man, in its self-imposed authority, argue in loud and defiant tones against the still small voice of spirit within, endowed with authority supreme? But in the field of spirituality, inherent right is never sought to be established by external might, and coercion from without never takes the place of illumination from within. The Lord sits enthroned in the heart of man in His divine infinite majesty, as infinite as His supreme condescension, extreme affability, unfathomable mercy and Himalayan patience. The Divine Father of man holds Himself in perfect patience till the return of His prodigal son, for return he must sooner or later; and His brooding love for the child that goes astray accompanies him, however far he may wander into the wilderness of ignorance and the tangle of illusion, and abides with him as an invisible but potent presence, conscious of its power over darkness and confident of its ultimate triumph, watching, inspiring and leading forward till, getting glimpses of divine wisdom, he retraces his steps of his own accord and finally merges in Himself. Then all disputes cease, the underlying unity is perceived, and there is harmony, peace and joy everywhere, at all times and under all conditions.

THE SIX DARSANAS

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

The name *Darsanas* has been given to a group of six systems of Indian philosophy in which the eternal differentia of the Vedic thought were presented in a reintegrated form culminating in the Vedanta. We must remember that their contents are not new at all, though the systematisations were new. The fundamental concepts of the *Darsanas* were existent in the Vedic thought. The sages who formulated the *Darsanas* refer to one another in the Sutas, and evidently launched their polemic as soon as the heretical systems of thought were adumbrated. That is why the later works on Jainism and Buddhism were subsequent to the great Sutas of the sages of the *Darsanas*. The expounders of the Sutas in their turn attacked the heretical critics of the *Darsanas*. The heretical systems themselves were in the course of development during centuries; and in the same way the orthodox systems were in the course of development during centuries. It is an almost impossible task to settle the chronological sequence of every one of the heretical and the orthodox *darsanas* and their subsequent expositions and amplifications. It must however be pointed out that the Samkhya as described in the Gita is not the

Samkhya of the Samkhya system but refers to the path of *Jnana*. The *Yoga* as described in the Gita is not subsequent to the *Yoga* system but is antecedent to it. The Gita does not refer to the Yogic Siddhis in explicit terms at all. It does not refer at all to the Nyaya and the Vaiseshika schools of thought. Though it refers to *Brahma Sutrapadaishchaiba* Ch. XIII, Verse 4, Sri Sankaracharya shows that the reference is to the Upanishadic passages describing Brahman. Sri Madhusoodana also is of the same opinion. The Gita thus contains the essence of the Vedic revolutions and presents to us the Vedic doctrine in all its fulness. The *Darsanas* on the other hand present the truth in facets, and it is only in the Vedanta that we find a complete reintegration of the Vedic thought once again. The *Brahma Sutras* refer to the Upanishads and the Gita for positive affirmations of doctrine, and at the same time they refer to the other *Darsanas* to refute whatever is contained in them at variance with the Upanishads and the Gita. What is of value in the other *Darsanas* is their general outlook, their criticism of the heretical schools of thought, and their elements of harmony with the Vedic thought. The Samkhya categories are met with even in the Katha Upanishad, but there the affirmation of the Paramatman goes hand in hand with those categories. In the same way the Svetasvatara Upanishad refers not only to Maya and Gunas but also to Brahman and Isvara. We must bear these facts in mind when we try to ascertain the exact place—philosophical as well as chronological—of the *Darsanas* in the history of the evolution of Indian philosophy.

To understand this matter aright we must bear in mind the fact that both the heretical systems and the orthodox systems reach back to dates older than their formal formulations. We may say generally that the heretical speculations came to a head in the Charvaka and Jaina and Buddhistic systems while the orthodox affirmations came to attain diverse degrees and types of crystallisation in the six *Darsanas*. One special feature about such parallel development has been better brought out by Max Muller than any other expounder in recent times. He points out how in the ancient times in India philosophic thought was developed in various hermitages and transmitted from master to pupil in succession. He says: "All that would happen and did happen was that certain opinions which had been discussed, sifted, and generally viewed in one Asrama (hermitage), Arama (garden), or Parishad (religious settlement) would in time be collected by its members and reduced to a more or less systematic form These young pupils were in fact the books, the scribes were the Gurus, the tablet was the brain But whatever was the origin of the peculiar Sutra literature—and I give my hypothesis as hypothesis

only—all scholars will probably agree that these Sūtras could not be the work of one individual philosopher, but that we have in them the last outcome of previous centuries of thought, and the final result of the labours of numerous thinkers whose names are forgotten and will never be recovered." He says further: "If we keep this in mind, we shall see that the question whether any of the texts of the six philosophies which we now possess should be considered as older than any other, is really a question impossible to answer. The tests for settling the relative ages of literary works, applicable to European literature, are not applicable to Indian literature. Thus, if one Greek author quotes another, we feel justified in taking the one who is quoted as the predecessor contemporary of the one who quotes. But because Jaimini quotes Bādarāyana and Bādarāyana Jaimini, and because their systems show an acquaintance with the other five systems of philosophy, we have no right to arrange them in chronological succession." He says further: "The result of this desire to fix dates, where dates are impossible, has often proved most mischievous. Scholars of recognised authority have arrived at and given expression to convictions, not only widely different, but diametrically opposed to each other."

I have quoted these passages to emphasise a fact which is often forgotten. I feel sure that the Upanishadic thought is the bedrock of all philosophic thought in India, and that the Gita is its divine summation and synthesis. The heretic systems sprouted and shot up in course of time, and the orthodox systems also were formulated to counteract and overthrow the heretical systems. The original protagonists of the *Darsanas* were probably a group of great sages who formulated their systems and referred to each other to clarify thought by discussion, their object being to overthrow the heretical systems first by reason and then by reason and revelation combined. The heretical systems found their summations in the Charvaka and Jaina and Buddhist systems, and the later expositions of the *Darsanas* finally and eventually overthrew such summations of heretical doctrine.

The great common features of all the six *darsanas* are their acceptance of the authority of the Vedas and their being an expression of the real and essential genius of the race. There is, as already stated by me, a crescendo of spiritual thought in them from the Nyaya and the Vaisesika through Samkhya and Yoga to the Purva Mimamsa and the Uttara Mimamsa or the Vedānta Sūtras. It is in the last that we find a synthesis of the highest and most fundamental Hindu ideas and the culmination of Indian thought. It is easy to emphasise the diversities and divergences of the systems but it is more valuable to realise and emphasise their harmony and essential unity.

Dr. Radhakrishnan says about them that "every system is an admixture of logic and psychology, metaphysics and religion". The modern philosopher folds his robe about him scornful of religion and gets as his reward the choking sawdust of inane and incomprehensible gibberish. The combination of philosophy and religion in India has been to the advantage and glory of both. The Indian systems of philosophy are traceable to the Vedas. As Dr. Radhakrishnan says well: "There are no absolute beginnings for spiritual possessions." The Sutras or aphorisms in which the six systems are expounded with a wonderful economy of words and affluence of thought are the points of convergence of ancient spiritual words and the centres of emergence of later philosophic systems.

The six *Darsanas* are thus all derivatives of the Vedas. They formed the reaction of the Hindu genius as against the onslaught of the philosophic nihilism of Buddhism. They pointed with stretched forefinger in the direction of the eternal varieties of life. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The real is not the universe extended in space and time; for its nature is becoming and not being. There is something deeper than this—atoms and souls, or purusha and prakriti, or Brahman." All the systems aim at the realisation of the eternal beatitude, however much they differ about the nature and content of the beatific experience. Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "It is a fundamental belief of the Hindus that the universe is law-abiding to the core, and yet that man is free to shape his own destiny in it. The systems believe in rebirth and pre-existence. . . . Philosophy carries us to the gates of the promised land, but cannot let us in; for that, insight or realisation is necessary. The ideal of the systems is practically to transcend the merely ethical level..... All systems recognise as obligatory unselfish love and disinterested activity, and insist on *chittasuddhi* (cleansing of the heart) as essential to all moral culture. In different degrees they adhere to the rules of caste (Varna) and stages of life (Asrama)."

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BUDDHISM AND BIRTH-CONTROL

One of the most deadly pestilences, more dangerous and destructive than anything properly so called, that at present threatens to devastate human society is the practice of birth control. Under the false cloak of humanitarianism the upholders of this fad are only preaching what would in practice be only a philosophy of depravity. But whereas they have till now been seeking the aid of science and altruism alone in their propaganda, we learn recently from the Maha-Bodhi that they are now invoking the sacred name of religion too to find an authority for their cherished view. For in the April-May number of the Maha-Bodhi we find an article entitled 'Random

Reflections on Buddhism and Birth-Control' from the pen of an American lady who tries to justify the practice of birth-control in the light of the Buddha's teachings. She argues that if persons having a tendency to a serious disease beget children, they are acting against the principle of Ahimsa, as they are sure to transmit their disease to thier offsprings. Under such circumstances she says : " Shall the unhealthy individual, if he or she dearly loves some one, refrain from marriage? That would, I think, be vicious. Shall he marry and have children to inherit his disease? That is about the most wicked thing that any one can do. What then shall we do? What but the Middle Way between extremes. That is to say, he should marry, and by means of some one of the methods of birth control, refrain from having children.

" There are other circumstances in regard to which a family should regulate the number of their children and the approximate time of their arrival. For instance, it is, I believe, established as a fact, that three years should elapse between the birth of one child and that of the next. This gives the mother one year of rest in which to recuperate from having one child and to grow strong for the birth of the next one. If we do not take these precautions where is our Buddhist ideal of harmlessness?"

We perfectly agree with the view that it is very bad to transmit one's illness to succeeding generations and to bring into this world more children than a family can maintain. But to effect this by the practice of birth-control will be only eradicating one evil by a greater one. All religions preach self-restraint to their votaries, and more so the religion of the Buddha ; for the Buddha proclaims with an emphatic voice that desire is the cause of all evil and its eradication is the only avenue to happiness. But the practice of birth-control on the other hand encourages indulgence in animal passions, as it removes the only incentive that an average individual has towards abstinence in married life. Moreover by providing an easy remedy for avoiding the consequences of sexual irregularities, it encourages excesses and infidelity in married life, promiscuity among the sexes, prostitution and a host of other social evils. From the standpoint of health also medical men who are not faddists or are not influenced by pecuniary motives are of unanimous opinion that this disgusting practice brings about serious disorders and diseases in women. Thus from considerations of health it is condemnable, and doubly so from the standpoint of religion, as it cuts at the root of the ideals of Brahmacharya and chastity which form the bed-rocks on which all religions are built.

From the national and sociological standpoints it is more dangerous than a virulent pestilence. A plague or a pestilence can be checked by proper means and they generally affect only parts of a country. But if the knowledge about the practices concerning birth-control are made known to all, including the masses, it will be entrusting the common man with a dangerous information which can never perhaps be retracted and which by ready application at their hands will act as a blight on humanity and eventually sweep off nations from the face of the earth. For if our faddists know a bit of history, they will find that the great nations of ancient times that have one after another passed away from the stage of the world had collapsed not so much for wars or economic strain as for moral degradation which had sapped their manhood and rendered them already powerless against foreign attacks.

What then is the way out of the difficulty? How can the evils be avoided without the aid of such dangerous practices? The only safe solution is to instil into man a greater regard for the ideals of continence and chastity. By a proper system of education man should be made to understand from early life that he is endowed with sex-power for creative purposes, physical, intellectual, or spiritual, and not for indulging in the animal cravings of his heart. He must be made to realise that by conserving sexual energy he is increasing his capacity for achievement in whatever field he likes, whether it be material, altruistic, intellectual, or spiritual; for an intense ambition in some direction or other and the knowledge that continence is one of the chief means of achieving it are the best means of curbing his sexual urge. And as for married people, it should be clearly understood that the sex-relation between husband and wife is intended only for begetting a few children, and it should be strictly limited for that purpose alone. In a recent book called *Thurston's Philosophy of Marriage*, published by S. Ganesan & Co., Madras, can be found many valuable suggestions regarding this point. The central part of the remedy he suggests is that husband and wife must always sleep in separate rooms, and meet only when both desire progeny. We think that this is a very valuable suggestion, and if people at large adopt it, and a purer and more wholesome view on marriage and sex-life is created in their minds by proper education, we feel that many a complex economical, social and moral problem of mankind will be solved, and that it will result in an improved race of men, healthier, happier, more intelligent and more virtuous. No doubt it is a great up-hill task, but not in any way impossible of achievement for human altruism and spiritual ardour.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Minor Upanishads : Published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora : Pages 104 : Price, Re. 1.

This small book is a collection of eight minor Upanishads—Paramahansa, Atma, Amritabindu, Tejabinidu, Sarva, Brahma, Aruneyi and Kaivalya. Along with the text in Devanagari is given a lucid English translation of the same with elaborate and illuminating comments. The Upanishads included in this volume are beautiful compositions of rare sublimity and spiritual fervour. They combine in themselves the highest metaphysical conceptions of Vedanta along with a simplicity and sweetness of diction characteristic of a work of genuine inspiration. Devoid of linguistic twists and quaint symbolism, and untainted by ritualistic ideas, their common note is their emphatic call for renunciation and practical spiritual life. In short they reveal the essence of Vedic wisdom in brief, simple and straightforward language. All students of Indian thought and of practical spiritual life will find them highly instructive and inspiring. A brief introduction to the Upanishads in general, dealing with their date, their place in Vedic literature, their philosophy, etc., is given. The get-up of the book is neat and attractive.

The Path of the Elders, by Mr. Earnest Erle Power : Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar.

Buddhism falls into two divisions—the Hinayana (Southern Buddhism) and the Mahayana (Northern Buddhism). The author has undertaken to expound the former as he thinks that it represents the

religion of Buddha "in its purest and most original form." He has taken great pains to present a modern exposition of this religion and to remove many a misconception obtaining in Christian countries about Buddhistic ethics and Buddhist philosophy.

The charge that is generally levelled against Buddhism is that the Nirvana which it seeks to place before its votaries as the goal to be attained is "Nothingness." In chapters on the "Noble eightfold path" and on "Nibbana" the author has furnished a crushing reply to the charge by proving that Nirvana, if it can be called a condition at all, is "one of perfect equilibrium in which experience and the thing experienced are fully united leaving no strain whatsoever to be adjusted, no Karma to be generated or reduced." He has further described it as "that sort of state which prevails by the absence of something essentially different from itself. Nirvana is therefore not "nothingness".

The chapter on 'Deity' meets very effectively another accusation brought against Buddhism that it is a godless religion.

In it he has convincingly showed that there is no religion "which has so thoroughly probed the problem of God as Buddhism has done and is so utterly permeated with a wholesome, common sense God recognition." Buddha, he says, recognized a hierarchy of deities and the highest Deity according to him represented the highest Being who has only reached the highest evolutionary progress but has not yet attained to Nirvana, i.e., "to that state of balance and of equanimity that is selfless and imperturbable."

So far the author has done invaluable service to the eager students of Buddhism but when he says that 'Nirvana' is something which has been newly discovered by Buddha, that Godhead as understood by other religions is inferior to Nirvana the author has made an egregious blunder. Numberless passages can be quoted from the Upanishads describing self-realization--the goal of man--in exactly similar terms as those in which Nirvana has been defined in the pages of the book under review. No religionist claiming to have a correct knowledge of his religion and to have lived the life of religion will admit that Godhead and God imply any imperfections of the sort which Buddha is reported to have alleged as existing in this conception. Every religion puts up God as Self-existing, as Happiness itself and as devoid of imperfections of any kind.

An unbiassed study of the religious condition of India of the time of Buddha and of the pointedness with which he emphasized certain tenets and rules of life, keeping as it were in the background metaphysical problems about God, soul, etc., which had no direct bearing on the message he came to deliver, would show that Buddha indirectly acknowledged an all-powerful, perfect lawgiver--God, when he emphasized the inexorable nature of the Law of Karma and that he presented, in but a new garb and form suited to the age in which he lived, the same Absolute Brahman, the same goal of life as that portrayed in the time-honored Upanishads of the Hindu race. In fact Buddha was only a rebel child of Hinduism, who raised his voice against the corrupt form of Brahminism prevalent at the time in the shape mostly of rigid observance of unmeaning rites and ceremonies. He was in fact the fulfilment of Hinduism and can hardly be considered as having discovered anything new which had not already existed in the hoary Hindu Scriptures. Was it not on this account that he was incorporated in the Hindu pantheon as an incarnation of God?

With Gandhiji in Ceylon : by Mahadeva Desai ; Published by S. Ganesan & Co., Triplicane, Madras. Page 156.

The author gives in the first part of the book an account of Gandhiji's tour in Ceylon for collection of funds in aid of Khaddar industry, and incidentally gives vivid descriptions of Ceylon—of its landscape, of its people, of its religions, etc. In the second part of the book are given the important speeches that Mahatmaji delivered in various parts of the island. Most of these are by way of explaining the significance of Khaddar and exhortations to the people to encourage it. But one finds among them also speeches that reveal Gandhiji's spirit of humanism and sympathy for the poor as well as his reflections on Buddhism and on its relation to Hinduism. It is no doubt a valuable contribution to the national literature of India.

Charvaka-Shashti, by Dakshinaranjan Shastri : Published by the Book Company, Ltd., College Square, Calcutta.

The system of Charvaka was the Indian school of atheistic and materialistic philosophy which had a good deal of importance and influence at a certain period of our country's history. But since the great Hindu revival after the fall of Buddhism this system died out and at present even the original Sutras of this school are not extant. Under such circumstances the author of this book has done a pioneer work in bringing out this volume. For want of original texts the author has collected the Sanskrit Texts in this volume from the representations of the Charvaka system by philosophers of rival schools. He however promises in his introduction to bring out a volume of original texts, if such texts are made available by research. A valuable introduction covering 94 pages about some of the historical problems relating to the system is also given. All persons interested in Indian Philosophy will find the book useful.

National Anthems : compiled by Mr. R. K. Prabhu, Indian National Herald Office, Advocate Building, 21, Dalal Street, Fort, Bombay. Price Re 1.

In a neat volume of 124 pages Mr. Prabhu has compiled the national songs in English of a number of important countries in the world. The book is divided into three parts—the first deals with Indian songs, the second with the National Anthems of foreign countries and the third with songs of freedom having no reference to any particular country. A sense of national pride, an intense hatred of oppression and tyranny and a keen love of liberty are the common characteristic features of all these songs. In fact a song breathing these sentiments and clothed in language aglow with fire and rendered in a tune that rouses a people to heroic deeds constitutes an ideal national song. For India such a song is yet to be written, and a collection of this kind, we feel sure, will be helpful in its evolution. The compiler of this volume deserves our hearty thanks for presenting such a choice collection of national songs the perusal of which never fails to rouse patriotic emotions in the heart. We wish the book a wide circulation.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI NISHKAMANANDA PASSES AWAY

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of Swami Nishkamananda of the Ramakrishna Order at Rajkot

(Kathiawar), at the early age of thirty-seven. His demise was so unexpected that it came as a shock to us all.

In the beginning of August last the Swami was complaining of gripping pain in the right groin. He was examined by an England-returned Doctor who diagnosed it to be a case of hernia and declared that if he wanted radical cure he must get himself operated. Some days after the pain became so acute that the Swami was very anxious to get himself relieved of it. Consequently he was taken to the West Hospital on the 21st August and admitted in a Special Ward. On the 23rd he was operated by Dr. Hanes. By a week's time the wound almost healed up. Though he had fever every day, such patients in the normal course of things would be discharged on the 10th or 12th day of the operation. But Providence willed otherwise. For, against the expectations of the Doctors, the case became complicated. Gradually the Swami developed dysentery and septic fever and became very weak. The Doctors were hopeful at this stage, but soon the case took a still more serious turn and the Swami contracted double pneumonia. His vitality became so low that oxygen had to be administered for the last three days. His mind, however, was found to be in a state of exalted absorption. "Till the morning of the day he passed away," writes the Swami who along with many others was attending on the patient, "we could often hear him chanting the name of Siva or that of the Divine Mother. But gradually his voice became very low and indistinct..... Human efforts failed to keep him bound up in his mortal cage." He left his body at 8-15 P.M. on the 4th September. The next morning it was cremated. About 200 students with their teachers came from the local High Schools where the Swami had been taking religious classes, to pay their last homage to their spiritual preceptor as they used to call him.

The Swami who had been previously known as Chidambaranath came from one of the most distinguished families of Malabar. His father, Mr. Justice Sankara Menon, a retired Judge of the Travancore High Court, was a very pious devotee who spent a few days with the Swami Vivekananda during his travels in Southern India. Chidambaranath was then a young boy but even in later years he carried a faint memory of the great Swami whom he had seen in the days of his childhood with his father. He was a graduate in arts and in law of the Madras University and was practising at the Bar at Madura for a few years. In response to the national call, he suspended his practice in 1921 and devoted his whole time and energy to the service of the country. During the non-co-operation days he was for a time the Secretary of the North Malabar District Congress Committee and was also an active member of the Congress Relief Committee organised in connection with the Moplah Rebellion. His services in both capacities were highly appreciated. For a few months he was the Head Master of the National High School at Cannanore. He then left for the north where he was living a life of absolute self-dedication. For a year he was the Acharya of an Ashram and School at Bareilly. He travelled widely in the Himalayas and Tibet. His religious turn of mind made him hanker after higher peace and he therefore wanted scope and freedom for his spiritual practices. He joined the Adwaita Ashrama at Mayavati, Almora, Himalays, in the latter part of 1924. In 1926 he came to Madras and was staying for over a year. He took Sannyas in 1927 from His Holiness Swami Shivananda, the President of the Mission. He had served untiringly in the staff of both the Prabuddha Bharata and the Vedanta Kesari.

He was singularly candid, direct, pure, devoted and simple in nature. His deep love of the poor, his extreme simplicity, his unbounded devotion to duty, his constant alertness, his sweet affability profoundly impressed one and all of those with whom he came into contact. He was also very steadfast and austere. Not a single day passed without his chanting the Gita and spending several hours of meditation in the morning and noon, afternoon and evening. Indeed we have lost in him a typical Sadhu whose brief span of life is a crowded record of self-less work and spiritual austerities. May Lord grant him eternal rest and peace !

MARTYRDOM OF JATINDRANATH

Sjt. Jatindra Nath Das, the gallant son of Bengal, whose loss the whole India mourns to-day, passed away at the early age of 25 on the 13th of September at 1.5 P.M. in the Borstal Jail at Lahore after a protracted hunger-strike lasting for 63 days. He is now beyond the reach of the so-called 'custodians of law and order' and dwells in a realm where there is no oppression, no injustice to contend with. His high-souled patriotism—his grim and inflexible determination to vindicate the honour of his compatriots even at the cost of his own life—stands almost unparalleled in the history of mankind ; for except that of Ireland which is sanctified with the life-blood of the immortal MacSwiney, one would vainly ransack the history of the world to find such a unique instance of heroic self-sacrifice,—such a noble and enviable death that has demonstrated the utter futility of physical force and the ultimate triumph of the soul whose song is eternal freedom. His indeed is a life wherein the sublime teachings of the Gita have found their noblest fulfilment. The ideal of absolute non-violence that materialised itself in his life in all its beauty and grandeur shall serve, we doubt not, as a beacon-light in India's striving for emancipation and fillip up thousands of her drooping souls into a renewed life of intense activity that shall know no rest until the victory is achieved. We hope his noble martyrdom that has opened a new chapter in the annals of India's struggle for liberation shall not go in vain and million hearts shall draw unfailing inspiration from the crowded pages of his life, which are so full of light and meaning.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK

Our flood relief work in the Sylhet and Cachar districts of Assam is progressing satisfactorily. In the first two weeks of this month our eight centres distributed 672 mds. and 30 srs. of rice and 442 pieces of cloth to 9,000 people of 276 villages. Our two dispensaries treated 413 patients during that period. Our centre at Radhaban, in the Tamuk sub-division of the Midnapur district, distributed during those two weeks 86 mds. and 36 srs. of rice to 879 people belonging to 30 villages. In the first week of this month our four centres in the Akyab district of Burma distributed 523 mds. and 14 srs. of rice and 130 pieces of cloth to 9,933 people of 72 villages. About 80 patients are receiving medical aid every day from those centres.

We need funds to carry on the work. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses :—

- (1) President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P. O., Howrah.
- (2) Manager, Udhodhan, 1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazaar Calcutta.

(3) Manager, Advaita Ashram, 182-A, Mukhtarām Babu St., Calcutta.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA,

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission,

18-9-29.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the R. K. M. Home of Service, Benares, shows a splendid record of the many-sided humanitarian works that the selfless workers of the Home did in the course of the year 1928. The need of such an institution in Benares where men and women, old, decrepit and penniless, flock in large numbers to spend their last days in the holy City of Lord Visvanath, is amply testified to by the ever-increasing call on the services of the Home, and the splendid work done in the cause of suffering humanity, without any distinction of caste or creed, by the monastic members and honorary workers of the Home deserves the patronage and whole-hearted support of the generous public.

The work done by the Home during the year under review may be summarised under the following heads:—(a) *Indoor (General Hospital)*—Although there is provision for 120 beds, the increasing call on service forced the authorities to convert some of the beds in the Male Refuge Block into Hospital beds. The daily average number of Indoor cases was 134. The total number of cases admitted was 1806 as against 1,720 of the previous year. Of these, 232 were surgical cases. All the three systems of treatment, the Allopathic, Homeopathic and Ayurvedic are adopted in the Hospital. (b) *Refuge for the Aged and Invalid*—Penniless and invalid pilgrims who lie down in the street or near the ghat awaiting the inevitable end, when reported at the Home, or found by the workers in their daily rounds are taken to the Hospital for treatment the invalid and aged among them having no means to support themselves are admitted into the Refuge which maintains 25 beds for this purpose. (c) *Refuge for Women Invalids*—In a house near the Dasaswamedh 12 helpless aged and invalid women are maintained with food, clothing and other necessities. As there is pressing need for expansion of this work, the authorities are trying to acquire an extra plot of ground for a special block to accommodate women invalids. Until this is done even deserving cases have to be refused admission. (d) *Girls' Home*—The women's department of the Home accommodates 7 girls who are under the supervision of a Lady Superintendent and are receiving education at the local Girls' High School. They participate in the general work of the female hospital which is entirely run by voluntary workers. (e) *Home for Paralytic Patients*—This section maintains 8 patients. (f) *Dharmasala for the Poor and Helpless*—Out of a special fund of Rs. 300 per annum 190 were given shelter and food. (g) *Out-door Dispensary*—During the year under review 23,706 new cases were attended to as against 23,267 last year and the number of repeated cases was 43,258. The average daily attendance was 201. (h) *Out door Help to Invalids and Poor Ladies of Respectable Families*—A large number of poor but respectable men and women who go to Benares to spend the fag end of their lives in the Holy City drag on a very miserable existence for want of food and clothing. Considering it beneath their dignity and self-respect to follow the ordinary path of beggars they welcome all sorts of privation and are found unwilling to apply even to the Home for

help. To reach such persons two of the Home workers go every morning round the city to collect rice and distribute it among such persons. The money and other things as cloth, blankets, etc., are supplied by the Home. The number of such recipients was 165 and the total cost for this amounted to Rs. 2,266 in money and 143 md. 13 srs. 12 cht. of rice besides cloths and blankets. (i) *Special and occasional help*—Daily many people go to the Home for a meal, clothing, passage money, etc. 1,235 persons coming under this heading were assisted during the year.

As for the finances of the Home the total receipts amounted to Rs. 50,146-2-7. The total expenses of the general fund came to Rs. 38,012-14-0, thus leaving a balance of Rs. 12,433-4-7. Still the income did not go up to the expectation of the Home authorities as there is need for Rs. 25,000 for purchasing the extra plot of land for the contemplated extension of the Women's Department.

In conclusion the Home authorities appeal to the generous public for help to fulfil the following pressing needs of the Home :—
 (1) Permanent endowments for beds for the sick and the invalid, the cost for each bed being Rs. 3,000 for the sick and Rs. 2,500 for the invalid. Donors may avail themselves of this opportunity and arrange for memorials to perpetuate the memory of their beloved departed.
 (2) Bedding and clothing which are constantly needed. (3) Construction of quarters for workers. (4) Construction of an invalids' Home for Women. The cost of land to be acquired for this purpose is Rs. 50,000 and the total cost of buildings has been estimated at Rs. 35,000. Against this amount the Government have contributed Rs. 25,000 for the acquisition of land and Rs. 10,000 have been received from other sources.

The authorities of the Home hope that their appeal in the name of suffering humanity will meet with ready response at the hands of the generous public.

R. K. MISSION SEVA SAMITY, SYLHET

The Twelfth Annual Report of the Samity for the year 1928 shows that it conducted 4 night schools, 2 girl schools, one M. E. School and one primary school for the education of the poor classes. It ran three libraries and four charitable dispensaries in different places and the total number of the new cases treated was 5,383 and that of the repeated ones came up to 10,923. The Samity, moreover, treated 68 pox-patients from the Debpur centre, of whom 59 were cured, 6 died and 3 left treatment. Cholera relief-work was also carried on in the villages of Khalagram, Sonpara and Hilalpura and out of the 42 patients treated, only 11 died. Religious classes and public celebrations were held as usual. The present needs of the Samity are detailed below:—(i) one corrugated iron-roofed house for the M. E. School at Debpur,—the estimated cost being Rs. 1,500. (ii) Rs. 250 for erecting a separate shed to accommodate the female patients at the Dispensary. (iii) Rs. 1,000 for building quarters for the teaching staff and the doctor. (IV) Rs. 400 to finish the work of excavation of the tank already begun at Debpur. (v) Rs. 1,000 for erecting a School-building and a prayer-hall for the Patra Khashias of Dakshinach Pergana. The Secretary conveys his hearty thanks to all sympathisers, donors, subscribers and the doctors for their ungrudging co-operation and help in all the activities of the Samity and hopes that the public would come forward with adequate financial support to remove the outstanding needs of the Samity.

VIVEKANANDA INSTITUTE, KALITALA, BANKURA

The Institute reached its second year in 1334 B. S. It conducted one night school, one gymnasium and a library. Religious classes were also held by Swami Nirlepananda on every Saturday. It gets a monthly donation of Rs. 10 from the Bankura Municipality and subscriptions from the members of the Institute. But the amount so received is too inadequate to meet its varied expenses. Needless to say, the stability and growth of such philanthropic Institutes depends upon the munificence and co-operation of the public, and we hope its appeal for help shall not go in vain.

THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, COLOMBO

We are in receipt of the report of the Vivekananda Society, 61, Hill Street, Colombo for the year 1928. The Society has been existing for the past twenty-six years. It records 1,021 members on its roll at present. A library containing 1,067 books, a reading room receiving 35 periodicals and papers are attached to the Society. It is also maintaining a Vernacular School. Under the auspices of the society a number of discourses were given by many distinguished persons, and regular Sunday classes on Hindu scriptures were held by Swami Ayinanananda of the Ramakrishna Mission. The Society performed the Gurupooja of the 63 Saivite Saints, and celebrated the 67th birth day anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda. A building scheme to meet the housing requirements of the society is under consideration, the estimated cost of the same being Rs. 10,000. The Secretary appeals to the generous public for contributions.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, BRINDAVAN

The Sevashram completed its twenty-second year at the end of 1928. The indoor hospital treated 270 patients, of whom 229 were cured, 33 passed away, 4 left treatment and 4 remained at the end of the year. The outdoor dispensary treated 31,291 patients as against 21,996 of the previous year; of these 10,046 were new and 21,245 repeated cases. Besides Medical help the Sevashram also rendered financial help whenever possible. It distributed Rs. 107 to five respectable helpless pardanashin ladies. A new Cholera ward has been added to the Sevashram.

Immediate needs of the Sevashram are:—(1) A General Ward at the cost of Rs. 2,000. (The only ward which the Sevashram has is meant for female patients, but necessity compels the authorities to use a portion of it for male patients also). (2) A guest house at an estimated cost of Rs. 6,000. (3) An Out-door Dispensary building with an operation theatre and separate dispensing rooms for Homeopathic and Allopathic sections at the estimated cost of 10,000. (4) A Pthisis Ward at the cost of Rs. 2,000 to accommodate 6 patients. (5) A bathing Ghat for pilgrims and people of the locality as well as a protective wall at an estimated cost of Rs. 10,000.

The monthly income of the Sevashrama is about Rs. 300 which can hardly meet the heavy current expenditure of the institution. In order to place the work on a stable basis it is absolutely necessary to have a substantial permanent fund. Any one who desires to perpetuate the memory of departed relatives or friends can do so by building one or more rooms at a cost of Rs. 1,000 each, or by removing any one or more needs of the Sevashram mentioned above, or by contributing to the permanent fund. All contributions should be sent to the Secretary, R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Brindavan.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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[No. 7

PRAYER

ॐ

नमः परस्मै पुरुषाय भूयगे
सद्ब्रह्मस्याननिरोधलीलया ।
गृहीतशक्तिविनयाय देहिना-
मन्तर्भवायानुपलक्ष्यवत्सने ॥
भूयो नमः गदवृजिनच्छिदेऽगता-
मगम्भवायाखिलसत्त्वमूर्तये ।
पुंसां पुनः पागमहंस्यत्राश्रमे
व्यवस्थितानामनुमृग्यदासुपे ॥

O supreme being of unsurpassed greatness, Thou who assumest the threefold powers (of Rajas, Sattva and Tamas) in thy sportive activities of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe ; Thou who abidest in the innermost heart of creatures and whose ways are inscrutable ; to Thee my salutations.

My salutation again unto Thee of pure Sattvika form who dispel the sorrows of the righteous and annihilate the wicked and also confer on those who have entered the life of absolute renunciation the bliss of Atman that is ardently sought after by them.

SRIMADBHAGAVATAM,

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Sri Ramakrishna's visit to the Sinduriapati Brahmo Samaj. His conversations with Srijut Vijay Krishna Goswami and others.

It is 26th November, 1883. The anniversary of the Sinduriapati Brahmo Samaj is being celebrated in the house of Srijut Manilal Mallik on the Chitpur road in the city of Calcutta. The prayer hall is tastefully decorated with green leaves, flowers and garlands. The devotees have taken their seats inside, and are waiting for the prayer. They are showing a great enthusiasm and are eagerly expecting Sri Ramakrishna who has promised to be with them. The Master is very fond of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj,—Keshab, Vijay, Shivanath and others. For this reason he has endeared himself to the Brahmo devotees. Besides, his god-intoxication, his divine love, his burning faith in God, his child-like talks with God, his piteous cry for the Lord, his regard for women as embodiments of the Divine Mother, his shunning of worldly talks, his continuous talks on God, his ideal of the harmony of religions and absence of hatred for the religions of others, his great eagerness to meet the devotees of the Lord,—all these have attracted the hearts of the Brahmo devotees towards him. And that is why many have come from distant places to have a look at him.

[Shivanath and Truthfulness. The Master in Samadhi]

The Master is talking to Srijut Vijay Krishna Goswami and other Brahmo devotees with a smile on his lips. The lamps in the hall are lighted and the prayer is to begin soon.

Sri Ramakrishna : Well, will not Shivanath come ?

A Brahmo devotee : No, sir. He has many engagements and won't be able to come.

Sri Ramakrishna : I feel so happy to meet him. He remains, as it were, steeped in devotion. Moreover, he is much honoured and respected by many. This indicates the presence of some divine power in him. But he has got a great fault; he does not keep his word always. Once he told me that he would visit Dakshineswar. But neither did he go there, nor send word that he would not go; this is not proper. It is said that truthfulness alone is the greatest penance for this iron age. One can realise God by holding on to truth alone. While losing regard for truth one loses his all in course of time. For this very reason, when once I say I would go out, go out I must even if I feel no inclination for it. I do so lest I would lose my hold on truth. After reaching my present spiritual state, I offered flowers to the Divine Mother praying, 'Oh Mother, here I offer to Thee (relative) knowledge

and ignorance ; do Thou bless me with the purest devotion. Here I give back to Thee so called purity and impurity ; do thou bless me with the purest devotion. Here I give Thee back good and evil ; do Thou bless me with the purest devotion. Here I offer to Thee merit and demerit ; do thou bless me with the purest devotion.' When I pray like this I cannot, however, say, ' Take away also truth along with falsehood ? I can give back everything else to the Mother but not truth.

The prayer begins now. According to the rites of the Brahmo Samaj the Acharya (proacher) is seated on the pulpit with a light burning in front of him. After the invocation he is chanting the great Vedic Mantrams in praise of Brahman. And the Brahmo devotees also are repeating in chorus those holy words uttered by the hallowed lips of the ancient Aryan seers. They are chanting—

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म । आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति । शान्तं शिवमैद्वतम् । शुद्ध-
मपापविद्धम् ।

" The Real, the Conscious, the Infinite is Brahman—That which shines forth as Bliss and Immortality—The Peaceful, the Beneficent the One—the Pure, the one untarnished by evil."

The sound of the Mantrams uttered with Om at the beginning is resounding in the hearts of the devotees. And as its result the minds of many have become almost free from worldly desires and to a great extent calm and meditative. The eyes of all those present are closed. Every one seems to be engaged in the meditation of the Saguna Brahman (Brahman with attributes) as described in the Vedas.

The Master too is lost in ecstasy. With eyes winkless, gaze fixed, and speech suspended, he is sitting like a picture drawn on canvas. It seems, like a freed bird his soul is roaming about somewhere in joy, and the body is left behind like an empty cage.

Immediately after coming back from Samadhi the Master has opened his eyes. He is looking round, and finds every one sitting with eyes closed. All of a sudden he stands up uttering "Brahman," "Brahman".

The prayer is over and the devotees have begun singing the name of the Lord to the accompaniment of Khol (Indian drum) and cymbals. The Master has joined the party and is dancing intoxicated with Divine Bliss. Every one is charmed to witness the dance, Vijay and other devotees are dancing encircling the Master. Witnessing the wonderful sight and enjoying the bliss of Sankirtan, many have almost forgotten the world. Being inebriated with joy divine they have lost all thoughts of sense enjoyment for the time being. Really worldly happiness has come to appear bitter to many.

The singing is over. All present have now taken their seats around the Master, eager to hear him.

II

[Sri Ramakrishna's Advice to Householders]

Addressing the Brahmo devotees Sri Ramakrishna says : "It is very difficult to live in the world unattached. Pratap (Majumdar) once told me, 'Sir, ours is the path followed by King Janaka. He lived in the world unattached, and we too want to do the same.' To this I replied, 'Can one become like King Janaka by the mere wish? Do you know how much Tapas (asceticism) he had to do before he realised the highest knowledge? It is said that in a difficult posture—holding his head downwards and feet upwards—he passed through a course of most difficult penances and austerities for many, many years!'

"Is there then no way for the householders? Certainly there is. One should practise spiritual disciplines in solitude for sometime. It is thus that one can attain to devotion and knowledge. After having done this, if you lead a worldly life, it does not matter. At the time of undergoing spiritual practices you should keep yourself completely aloof from the world; you should not have near you your wife or children, father or mother, brother or sister or any other relative. During the period of retirement think that there is none in the world whom you can call your own, and that God and God alone is really your all in all. Cry unto the Lord and pray to him for knowledge and devotion.

"You may ask how long a person should keep himself away from the world and live in retirement. Well, it is good if he can do it even for a day. It is better if he can do it for three days. Let him live in solitude for sometime—say, a year, or three months, or a month or at least twelve days. There is not much to fear from the world if one enters it after attaining Divine knowledge and devotion.

"If you first smear your hands with oil and then break open the jackfruit, the milky exudation of the fruit will not stick to your hands. In the play of hide and seek, if you succeed in touching the "Grand dame" (Boori) you do no longer run the risk of becoming a "thief",—you have no longer to take part in the play and are free to go about wherever you please. Once you touch the philosopher's stone and turn yourself into gold, you remain the same gold for ever, even if you lie buried in the ground and are dug out after a thousand years.

"The mind may be likened to milk. If you put it in the water of the world, it gets mixed up. To avoid this, the milk is to be set

into curd in a quiet place, and then it is to be churned and butter obtained therefrom. Similarly, you have to pass through spiritual practices if you want to get the butter of knowledge and devotion from the milk of the mind. Then, you may safely keep this butter in the water of the world. It will never get mixed up ; it will remain floating on the water without being affected by it."

IN DEFENCE OF HINDUISM—I

One of the outstanding features of the modern age is that every nation, great or small, is striving after self-expression in accordance with its characteristic philosophy of life. For, nations like individuals have got their distinctive tendencies aggregated into a living force for their cultural growth and advancement. But the ideas of progress being different among the different races of the world owing to their difference in outlook on life, there has not up till now been any consensus of opinion as to the merits and demerits of the culture of any particular race or nation. It is our common experience that whatever satisfies the standardised notions of the majority of nations, is more often than not hailed as a superior type of culture as if the verdict of the majority, like that in a tribunal of justice, is the incontrovertible test of the real worth and genuineness of human progress and greatness ! Whatever the case may be, it is a fact that the greatness of a culture is to be evaluated not by the numerical strength of its supporters but by its permanent usefulness and approximation to the supreme realities of life. So it is that although western materialism has today received almost a universal acceptance for its capacity to fulfil the *immediate* ends and pleasure of human life, it has as well met with a stern opposition and condemnation at the hands of many enlightened souls who have found out its utter futility as a power to advance the cosmic human welfare and have gone beyond its scintillating charms in their attempt to realise what constitutes the *permanent* reality of being. The greater part of humanity is mad after material culture today and there is no knowing what would be the ultimate result of such a frenzied craze for material glory. Our experience shows that a culture that is rooted in the sordid conception of physical enjoyment cannot stand the test of time, far less satisfy the ultimate end of human destiny that realises itself in the synthetic understanding of the unity of life. But it must be borne in mind that the process of cultural evolution towards a higher unity of human purposes does not necessarily argue a total absence of a striving for a healthy growth of other aspects of life. It is for the advocacy of spiritual idealism

and emphasis on the spirit that does not put too much premium on the material concerns of life, that India has been branded by the hierophants of materialism as a land of effete civilisation and superstitious religion bereft of all virile and progressive elements in it ! The present emasculated condition of India has all the more strengthened such an idea, and India's culture has been set down as the cause of her demoralisation and political thralldom. India's religion, in the opinion of such critics, is but a 'mixture of nightmare nonsense and time-wasting rubbish' and quite inefficient to mould human life into a spiritual entity capable of infinite expansion. The changes in the realm of politics are of far greater consequence with them, than the innate potentiality of a race to maintain the unbroken continuity of a rich cultural life in the midst of manifold changes. The history tells us that in every age and clime, in the East as well as in the West, myriads of conquering hords turned into dreary waste many a fertile and smiling soil of the world. But it still remains a fact that while the civilisations of many western countries have been blotted out before such mighty cataclysms, the integrity of India's cultural life has remained undisturbed under similar tragic circumstances. The changes only added to the momentum in the life of her cultural advance. Herein lies the potentiality of Indian genius. Thousands and thousands of years have rolled by ; master after master has come and melted away ; countless races and nationalities have sought shelter in her bosom. Political changes like floods of Nature must come and go. And these changes may sometimes be necessary for a greater manifestation of the dormant potentiality of a nation, instead of being a hindrance to its onward march. India has witnessed these changes many a time before and she has again stood face to face with a power of great magnitude. The battle of Freedom—freedom from political, intellectual and cultural domination—must now be fought on her own ground and all the scattered forces of Indian life—the accumulated wisdom of ages—must be mobilised to counteract the aggressive Westernism that has already made a remarkable advance in the fair field of India.

It is not uncommonly witnessed that cultural assaults follow in the wake of political conquest ; for an enslaved nation to be completely deracialised must be made to speak in the language and think in the thoughts of its conquerors. The case of India is not an exception to this universal phenomenon. Since the loss of her political freedom she has been through a concourse of peculiar circumstances, brought under a subtle process of cultural assimilation. Denunciation of the cultural achievements of the subject nation and the glorification of those of the conqueror is but one of the various forms in which such

an onslaught is made on the citadel of life and thought of a subject people. India has been suffering such an outrage for a long time at the hands of her white master and it must be noted with shame that in many matters of vital concern she has been made to sing to the tune of her political piper. The attack was never so virulent and persistent as it is today. India has after live-long years been roused to the consciousness of her real self and begun to manifest unmistakable signs of revolt against the cultural domination of an outlandish nation. Straightforwardness has become a rare commodity in the circle of Occidental politicians, nay of many champions of the religion of Jesus of Nazareth. Duplicity and meanness are never so dangerous as when they appear in the garb of beguiling sympathy and begin to spell the ruin of the unwary nations. This has been the unfortunate experience of India today. Many protagonists of Christianity have appeared on the stage of Indian affairs with a deceptive show of sympathy only to subserve their mean political ends. Their sole attempt has been to disfigure the face of India, to belittle the greatness of her religion and culture and thereby to prove before mankind her unfitness for political freedom. The recent antics of Miss Mayo are too well-known to need any repetition here. Persons of the type of William Archer whose notorious book "India and the Future" stands as an insult to the intelligence of humanity have become too numerous now a days under the fostering care of Imperialism. A few specimens of this kind may be presented to our readers to show how narrow-minded bigotry despoils the human soul of all its nobleness and grandeur.

Mr. J. N. Farquhar, M. A., author of *The Primer of Hinduism* and sometime Exhibitioner, Christ Church, Oxford, concludes his "precious" book with the following prophetic utterances: "We may be perfectly certain that ancient Hindu thought cannot survive. Something else will take its place. A new religion must be found, a religion which will,—(a) provide a religious foundation for the wider and truer ideas which now dominate the Hindu mind; (b) satisfy the religious instincts of the people, and stimulate them to purity, progress and strength. Christianity is unquestionably the source of the new explosive thought which is recreating the Indian character and intellect today. There is no other religion that contains these master ideas. Only in the riches of Christianity—Christ and His Cross, the Fatherhood of God—can Hindus find the universal principles needed for a new intellectual, moral and social life. Except Christianity, there is no religion in the whole world that is rich enough in theology, worship, emotion, literature to take the place." Thus the learned author did not stop with the sententious declaration of the superiority of Christian religion but predicted the approaching extinction of the

Hindu faith for its lack of ' universal principles ' to stand upon ! He further observes : " Brahman is thought of as reality, intelligence and joy but not as righteousness. Yet the Upanishads are the very summit of Hindu thought ! Thus moral character was in no sense a part of Vedic conception of God." The strictures so wildly cast upon the Upanishads and the conception of Brahman by this writer furnish the type of sounding rod of intelligence with which these protagonists of Christian faith attempt to plumb the unfathomable depth of Hindu religion. " The Bhagvad Gita," says Mr. Lewis Browne in his *Believing World*, " is an exceedingly confused and repetitious little work, and one greatly marred by bewildering inconsistencies.....Idols grotesque beyond description are to be found everywhere.....One wonders what will come of it at all. Fear, organised and intensified by priest craft, has led poor India into a quicksand whence there seems no escape. Century after century brave attempts have been made to reform the religion ; but invariably they have met with failure. No matter how many prophets come to the masses to tell them to destroy their idols and cast out their priests, those masses will not obey. They must have their reeds to cling to, their spirits to believe in." This is the stuff of " rich " Christian literature that is being broadcasted throughout the world to enlighten public opinion ! But these Christian enthusiasts who are so anxious to save the lost souls of India may rest assured that India does never stand in need of any such vicarious attention from these blind zealots for her enlightenment. It would not be out of place to show here how mightier intellects than those before whom these fanatics of the Christian-fold appear as so many pigmies, have paid their tribute of love and homage to the Indian thought and culture and found in it the abiding solace in this ' vale of tears '.

Schopenhauer, the illustrious German thinker once remarked : " In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death. . . . The world is about to see a revolution in thought more extensive and more powerful than that which was witnessed by Renaissance of Greek Literature." No less significant are the utterances of Prof. Deussen who in appreciation of the sublimity of the Vedic thoughts said : "The study of the Vedas was an alluring recreation, and to climb the heights of those great altitudes, a wonderful means of enriching and widening the spiritual horizon, giving a sense of exhilaration as one rises to a higher atmosphere." He considered the system of the Vedanta founded on the Upanishads and Vedanta Sūtras, as some of the most valuable products of

the genius of man in his search after truth, and that *the highest and purest morality is the immediate consequence of the Vedanta*. Quotations may be multiplied to point out the enormity of difference between the findings of the misguided Christian enthusiasts and those of the sincere seekers after Truth. The celebrated French philosopher Dr. Cousin writes: "When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, especially those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discern there so many truths, and truths so profound and standing in so strong a contrast with those mean results which, in later days, have satisfied European genius that we are tempted to bow the knee before the genius of the East, and see in that cradle of mankind the true home of philosophy." Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson the celebrated American thinker writing in 1840 in a letter to a friend observed: "In the sleep of the great heats there is nothing for me but to read the Vedas, the Bible of the tropic. . . . It is sublime as heat and night and breathless ocean. It contains every religious sentiment, all the grand ethics which visit in turn each noble poetic mind." In another place he remarks: "Yes, the Zoroastrian, the Indian, the Persian scriptures are majestic, and more to our daily purpose than this year's almanac or this day's newspaper. . . . I owed—my friend and I owed—a magnificent day to the Bhagavad Gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, *consistent*, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and another climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us." Prof. Max Muller who for his versatile genius and profundity of scholarship has rightly been styled as the English Sayanacharya recorded his appreciation of Indian wisdom in his learned introduction to the six systems of Hindu philosophy as follows: "None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows upon stone in regular succession—after once it has been clearly seen that, in the beginning there can have been but One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Atman or Brahman. We need not praise or try to imitate a Colosseum but if we have any heart for the builders of former days, we cannot help feeling it was a colossal and stupendous effort." It is not possible here in such a short compass to exhaust quotations from the learned and authoritative writings of the western savants who went far deeper into the life and thought of India and had the proud privilege of holding an intimate spiritual and intellectual communion with her. Persons of the eminence of Sir Willam Jones, Dr. Matheson and Tuckwell have paid their spontaneous homage to the sacred altar of

Indian genius and even gone so far as to say that there is no intellectual problem in the West which had not its discussion in the East and that in their main conclusions they have been anticipated by the religious philosophy of India. Friedrich Schlegel pertinently observed: "Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason, as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the modern-day sun, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished." We have purposely made long quotations from the authoritative statements of the eminent souls of the Western world to show how the richness of Oriental thought was unfolded to their synthetic vision and what a divine solace did they derive from a reverent study of the Hindu scriptures. The Vedas were to them not the 'babblings of an infant humanity' but the embodiment of highest spiritual wisdom and a living monument of 'every religious sentiment' and 'all the grand ethies which visit in turn each noble poetic mind'. The Bhagavad Gita which Mr. Lewis Browne in his *Believing World* has characterised as 'an exceedingly confused and repetitious little work and one greatly marred by inconsistencies,' has presented itself to the enquiring mind of Dr. Emerson not as a bundle of inconsistencies or confused talks but as the first of books 'serene and consistent'—unrolling before him the accumulated wisdom of countless ages.

In short, many great geniuses of the West including even the illustrious modern thinkers like Romain Rolland and Bertrand Russell have been able to outstrip the stereotyped process of thinking as obtains in the West, and venture out into the virgin lands of the spirit and thread the blazing trails through wilderness which less adventurous minds scarcely make bold to traverse. But notwithstanding this noble appreciation of Indian wisdom by the savants of the West and their high-souled attempt for a world-federation on a basis of cultural synthesis, love and toleration, the history of the modern age has been tarnished with the sinister activity of a band of misguided fanatics whose sole objective in life has been to lower down the Indian culture in the estimation of the civilised races of the world. They have in fact been very effective instruments in the hands of the protagonists of Imperialism and their activity as such has served the purpose of awakening a feeling of bitter hatred and antagonism between the East and the West. But Hinduism, we must state clearly, shall never suffer an eclipse from the vehement denunciations of Brownes or Farquhars, nor shall it gain in beauty and wisdom from the panegyrics of a few sincere souls; for it stands on its own merit

and must speak out in all ages to come as it has done in the past, the fundamental truths of human existence scorn of consequences and serve to guide humanity to its ultimate destiny. In the heat of our enthusiasm we generally forget that in judging of a civilisation we must look into its basic principles. And it is but truism that a culture that has no universal principles to stand upon is doomed to annihilation. Universality is the very soul of toleration and in fact the very salt of a culture that is destined to play a great role in moulding human aspiration. Needless to say, it is for this spirit of universalism and for the matter of that of toleration, that Hinduism still exists as a potent influence on the face of the earth inspite of many an organised attempt to crush it. Universality is the very keynote of Hinduism and Swami Vivekananda has rightly said: "From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the lowest ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu religion..... We gather all these flowers, and binding them together with the cord of love, make them into a wonderful bouquet of worship." Hinduism holds every religion to be true, for all religions embody a conscious effort of the human minds to grasp at the ultimate reality, and like various streams losing their identity in the vastness of the ocean these different religious systems of the world lead ultimately to the same truth. Moreover the findings of the modern scientists confirm the sublime truths as embodied in the Vedanta. Indian psychology demonstrated the oneness and solidarity of the whole universe ages ago even when the rest of humanity was just reeking in the very cradle of spiritual infancy. The Hindus realised that men, women, the sun, the stars, body, mind, in short the entire creation, are but wavelets in the midst of an infinite ocean of matter and behind this idea of unity, there is one eternal Existence—the existence of the Soul—the Brahman. It is the realisation of unity in the variety of religious faiths that has given an eternal sanction to India's message of religious toleration. Thus the conclusions of modern science which have so much been anathematised by the Christian theologians as being subversive of the very foundation of Christianity are but the unmistakable echoes of the spiritual findings of the ancient Hindu seers.

There is, besides, an infinite scope for development of the human minds according to their different tendencies and constitutions Hindu religion has been denounced as idolatrous but it must be borne in mind that the idealism that stands behind the worship of idols or images is a transcendental one

All the images are thought of as mere pegs to hang the spiritual ideas upon and are sublimated to the spiritual entity of which they are but different manifestations. *Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha Vadanti*—There is but one eternal Existence: the sages call It by various names. Differently constituted as the human minds are, these images or symbols are mere helps in their struggle for the realisation of the Absolute which is one and not many in its ultimate reality. The difference between the Hindus and the votaries of other faiths lies in the fact that while the Hindus associate these forms and images with the ideas of holiness, purity and omnipresence, accept them only as supports of their spiritual childhood and eventually transcend them in their onward progress towards the ultimate goal, 'other people devote their whole lives to their idol of a church and never rise higher, because with them religion means an intellectual assent to certain doctrines'. But Hinduism is nothing short of realisation of the divinity of man and the apprehension of his identity with the supreme Being. And it is to realise this end that the Hindus have opened before humanity an infinite scope for its gradual ascent to the terraced height of Realisation. So Swami Vivekananda has very aptly remarked: "To the Hindu man is not travelling from error to truth but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. To him all the religions from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and association; each of these marks a stage of progress, and every soul is a young eagle soaring higher and higher, gathering more and more strength till it reaches the glorious sun." If Hinduism which is broad-based upon such a noble spiritual idealism can still be charged with idolatry, may we not reasonably ask what religion is there on the face of the earth that is free from any such obnoxious appellation? In the words of Swami Vivekananda we may again ask: "Why does a Christian go to a church? Why is the Cross holy? Why is the face turned towards the sky in prayer? Why are there so many images in the Catholic church? Why are there so many images in the minds of the Protestants when they pray?" As a matter of fact while with protagonists of Christianity, to be born in the church and to die in it constitutes the summum bonum of earthly existence, with the Hindus nothing short of realisation of the Divine can satisfy the aspiration of the soul whatever may be the faith in which he is born. In fact it is the narrow-minded bigotry that has been the prolific source of all misunderstanding, quarrel and bloodshed. Toleration has ever been the central theme of Hindu religion and it did never want nor does it want in future cohorts to march before its path and clear its way. "Wisdom and philosophy do

not march on bleeding human bodies but come on the wings of peace and love." This is a sublime characteristic which has endowed the cultural life of India with unique grace and beauty—a feature rarely to be met with in the militant and destructive principles of some 'aggressive' faiths extant in the world. We shall try in our next number to show that Hinduism is not a *dead* religion but a *living* force in the world and instinct with a dynamic potentiality to guide the destiny of mankind to its noblest end and establish peace and harmony on the face of the earth.

THE ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY OF SANKARA

By Swami Samvidananda

The central idea of the philosophy of Advaita as expounded by Sri Shankaracharya rests on the Upanishadic utterances like "सदेव सौम्ये - दमप्रश्नासीदिकमेवाद्वितीयम् ।" "एतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत् सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वत- केतो ।" "नेहानास्ति किञ्चन ।"—which point to the truth that the universe is One in an essential, absolute Unity—eternal and infinite, involving the proposition that it is possible for the individual to realise his identity with the unconditioned Absolute ; that it is for ignorance or Avidya that this identity is out of sight ; that this ignorance being dispelled the individual rises above all dualistic limitations, and thus freed from the bondage of matter the individual ultimately merges in the Absolute Whole. These, then, form the very basic ideas that furnish, as it were, the corner-stone to the wonderful structure of Sri Sankara's philosophy of non-dualism or Advaita. Brahman is the one Reality, the absolute, infinite, unconditioned Existence; the multiplicity of the universe and the individual souls have no real existence apart from that. They exist in so far only as they participate in that Reality ; but in so far as they appear multiple they are ultimately unreal. The apparent and obvious diversity in the universe as it is has nothing more than a phenomenal existence : it is the offspring of Maya—the multiplying power of the Brahman so to say,—which spins out an infinite series of names and forms and thus gives rise to the panorama of the universe. The universe with its multiplicity of names and forms—like waves on the ocean—stands on the substratum of Reality, the Brahman, which is characterised as the very essence of Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute. This is the cardinal doctrine of Advaita Vedanta of Sri Sankaracharya put in a nut-shell.

So, Brahman is the central pivot on which the whole theme turns and it is out of the attempt to define and explain what is meant by Brahman and how we can approach this Brahman that the Advaitin builds up the structure of his magnificent system of philosophy. The definition or Lakshana of Brahman as proposed by the Advaitin is of two kinds, *viz.*, Essential Definition or "स्वरूपलक्षणः" and Relative or Accidental Definition, *i. e.*, तदस्थलक्षणः. The former seeks to point to the thing-in-itself, while the latter describes the thing in relation to other objects. The one tries to unfold the essential or inherent, while the other the accidental or extraneous character of the thing. Following this we may have our subject of study here divided into three parts, *viz.*, Brahman by itself, Brahman in relation to the material universe as a whole, and Brahman in relation to the individual souls.

In the study of the Upanishads we often come across bold utterances like: न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति नो मनः । न विद्यो न विजानीमो यथैतदनुशिष्यात् ॥ " There the eyes cannot go, neither speech nor mind we do not know what That is, neither do we know how to teach It to others. " Such is Brahman, That is beyond speech, beyond the reach of the mind."

Brahman, as the Advaitists say, is an absolute entity without any attributes, constituting, so to say, the very essence of all Existence, Knowledge and Bliss—the last generalisation of perceptual and conceptual realities of life. For instance, as human beings every one of us forms a particular part of the general concept of humanity. In a wider generalisation there are men and women, cats and dogs, birds and insects, all coming under the general concept of animality. Still wider, a man, a dog, a tree and a creeper, in short, all that we call sentient, come under a still more general concept—Life. But that yet is not the last. All these beings, all materials, stocks and stones, atoms and molecules, electrons and protons ; all perceptions, feelings and sensations, in short, whatever there is in thought or in matter, come under the one concept of existence. In and through this existence we live and move, see, feel, know, and do everything. Yet we do not see, that is to say, we cannot objectify, cannot grasp or formulate by any stretch of imagination what really that existence is. And this existence, according to Vedanta, constitutes the essence of what they call Brahman. The knowledge, again, which is said to be another constituent essence of Brahman is another expression of the very fact of existence itself ; it is that without which no existence is possible. A thing exists in so far as we know it. There can be no existence for us without our knowledge. By this knowledge is not meant the knowledge which we possess or talk of, but the very essence, the very

last abstraction of that which is unfolding itself as knowledge, in the course of evolution in human beings and in everything else that exists. It is, so to say, the very ultimate fact, beyond our consciousness even. The bliss that is pointed to be another essential constituent, so to say of the absolute reality called Brahman, is the essence of what we call love which unifies all and realises itself in existence and knowledge. The little joys and pleasures that we feel in our hearts, but for which life becomes a burden, nay an impossibility for any one of us, are but gross manifestations of that one substance which is characterised as the bliss of Brahman. These three—Existence, Knowledge and Bliss—as constituting the essence of Brahman, are not separate and independent entities by themselves; they are really one in an essential Whole. They are one in three and three in one. The undifferentiated essence of these three together, then, represent what a Vedantin understands by Brahman, the ultimate generalisation of all that exists, expressed in terms of the *positive*. All our knowledge and sciences are gradually approaching towards this absolute unconditioned Unity. The discoveries of modern science are bringing this and other Vedantic conclusions nearer home to us today. Science is proving to us in the most forcible language and with almost conclusive demonstrations every day that we are all one, physically and mentally, and as such spiritually. Physical science is proving to us that we are all but little whirlpools in an ocean of matter and are thus essentially one in it. Mental science is similarly bringing home to us that there is a vast ocean of thought in which our little minds are so many little bubbles. And if thus materialistic monism and philosophic monism are scientific and logical, spiritual monism then becomes inevitable. The one question that yet remains to be answered by science is what we hear, coming through the vistas of time, from the most ancient seers of the Upanishads :—“केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः । केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥” “By whom desired and impelled does the mind flow towards its objects ; by what again Prana or the vital force of life is made to proceed to its functions ; at whose bidding does speech utter, what effulgent One is there to direct the eyes and ears ?” To face squarely and answer this question science must inevitably be driven to the essence of all matter and thought, which is in their potentiality in the spirit. This will also show that science, philosophy and religion are not contradictory and warring interests, one trying to overthrow and establish supremacy over the other, but are in fact complementary to one another, and represent but gradual steps of approach to an Ultimate Unity. Scientific unity, philosophic unity and religious unity cannot remain separate unities. They all

must meet in an ultimate absolute One, in order that the claim to a unity be finally established. And it can be safely asserted that already Madame Curie's discovery of Radium and the latest analysis of Time, Space and Relativity by Einstein have gone a great way to show that a further step is in the process of being taken, and it is, therefore, not too much to hope that by the time materialism will have spent its last eddies, science, philosophy and religion will in one voice declare that Essential and Ultimate Oneness, from which all else have evolved. And this exactly is the last word of Advaita Vedanta, philosophically propounded by Acharya Sri Sankara. From this Unity everything else has evolved though in essence, *i.e.*, as the thing-in-itself, that unity is eternally beyond all perception, intellection or definition ; because who would know, reason or define whom, where there is but One ?

Coming to our next point, we are faced with a question which forms as it were the crux of the Advaita Philosophy. It is in fact a question that has been asked time and again in the past, is still asked and will ever continue to be asked till the end of time. The question is this : if Brahman is one undifferentiated infinite Absolute, how and wherefrom, then, does this universe, the many, come ? The Absolute cannot create the universe as a potter creating the pot. That would be childish. The Absolute manifesting itself as or becoming the universe would as well make the Absolute liable to mutation, and would, like milk curdled up, leave it as "the infinite minus the universe." Therefore the answer that Advaita gives us is—not that the Brahman has created the universe out of some co-existing material, nor even that the Brahman has itself evolved into the universe, but that Brahman appears as the universe by coming through Maya—the principle of Time, Space and Causation. But what, again, does this coming or going of the Absolute mean ? How and where can the infinite come or go ? And Advaita meets you with the answer that, it is not at all a question of coming or going on the part of the Absolute, nor is this Maya a thing existing in itself by the side of Brahman. By Maya is meant a principle—a fact, with the help of which we seek to explain what is inexplicable. This principle of Maya, or Time, Space and Causation is, as it were, a prism in which the Absolute is reflected, and when we look at that reflection it appears as the universe. The Absolute itself does not thereby change a whit. That we see all this is simply because of the defective constitution of our mind—the indispensable agent of all perception and knowledge. The problem here is exactly what modern science brings to us when it says that the human mind is three-dimensional, whereas the Absolute is something which has a fourth dimension and as such cannot be comprehended by the mind. Time, Space and Causation or what the

Advaitists call *Maya*, constitute three dimensions of the mind. There can be no idea of time in the Absolute, because there is no mind and consequently thought. There is no space in the Absolute, because there cannot be any space where there is no motion, and motion is incomprehensible where there is but one. Apart from time and motion, causation is impossible. Causation, if we are allowed to say so, begins when the Absolute has already become the phenomenal that is to say, has assumed change by being reflected in the prism of *Maya*. Here in this assumption of change of the Absolute begins the starting point of the universe. Hence follow will, desire and all that come in the process of evolution.

So, in order to understand the philosophy of Advaita we have first to understand and impress in our mind this idea very clearly, that, we see this universe because we cannot but look through Time, Space and Causation, which form integral parts of our mental constitution; and also that Time, Space and Causation cannot exist without relation to one another as well as to some other thing. Neither Time, Space nor Causation has any independent existence, nor even the combination of these three has any independent and ultimate existence. Yet they are not non-existent, because it is through them that we perceive or conceive of the universe. One can compare here Kant's analysis of Time, Space and Causation as "modes of thought," which is the same as what the great Advaitist Sri Sankara rationalised ages ago and called *Maya*. Their existence is like the glow around a light, which we cannot catch apart from what we call the light; yet it is the glow that gives us the knowledge of the light. They sometimes exist and sometimes vanish. A very familiar illustration of this dual nature of *Maya* is supplied by the waves in an ocean. We see a wave in the sea, as something beside the sea, but can we separate the wave from the sea? Certainly not. Rather we seem to feel sure that the wave is the same as the sea. Yet we see the wave as something different from the sea. Now, what is it that causes this difference? It is the *name* and the *form*. That is to say, "the idea in the mind" plus the "external something". But still we cannot think of a wave-form absolutely apart from what we call the sea: it must always be associated with the idea of the sea. And when the wave subsides and the form is no more there, what remains is nothing but the sea. Yet the wave was certainly *not a delusion*. So long as the wave existed and the form was there, we could not but see the wave. This apparent now-existing, now-vanishing aspect of manifestation is what is meant by *Maya* of Advaita philosophy. This conception of *Maya* is unique, and is a marked departure from that of the Buddhist and other idealists, and gives Sankara's philosophy an entirely original colour. The idealists' absolute

denial of the external world without a noumenal to support the idea of the phenomenal was responsible for the conception of Maya as delusion. But the "Maya of Sankara" in its last developed form connotes neither idealism nor realism, yet both. "It is no more a theory," as the Swami Vivekananda puts it, "but is a statement of facts as they are—facts as we are and see around."

The real Advaitist position is not, as the idealists would contend, that there are two worlds—one noumenal and the other phenomenal. There are in fact no *two*, it is all *one*. Such dual ideas as the subjective and the objective, the noumenal and the phenomenal, are but phases or "modes of thought," and as such neither of them can be said to be derived from the other. The reality is one, only when seen through the senses, when seen through Time, Space and Causation, it is phenomenal, but really it is noumenal all the time. The man who sees a snake in a rope does not for the time being see the rope at all, but as soon as the vision of the rope comes the snake disappears. It is therefore either the snake or the rope, but never both at the same time. *The very ideas of the external and the internal even do not exist by themselves except by differentiation only, and this principle of differentiation is what is called Maya.* The true position of Advaita, therefore, is that the universe as it appears severally and in totality is not unreal, but that it has no reality apart from Brahman. It can therefore be defined neither as real nor as unreal. One might here say that this is no explanation at all; one must be definite and exact in what one asserts. Yet it cannot but be so! This indeterminacy is in the very nature, nay, the very characteristic of all human knowledge. All our knowledge ultimately resolves itself into a vicious circle of relative and indeterminate interdependence of cause and effect, and thus shows its own insufficiency in relation to the Absolute.

So from what we have already seen it must be clear that it is through Maya—the differentiating principle of Time, Space and Causation, that the undifferentiated unity apparently divaricates itself into the two antithetic but correlated modes of manifestation, *viz.*, the subjects and the objects of knowledge. The universe which comprises the totality of all objects of knowledge as well as the individual souls which constitute the subjects of knowledge, are all alike the results of the process of Mayic or cosmic evolution. They are, therefore, not different from Brahman, and consequently from one another. For, if there is any ultimate difference between the particulars, *i.e.*, the various units of subjective and objective existence themselves, they can in no conceivable sense be maintained as non-different from the genera' *i.e.*, Brahman. So all limitations, *i.e.*, the conditioned forms of will and intelligence and consequent modifications in the subject

as also all conditioned forms of objective existence in the empirical world (Vyavaharic Jagat)—all spring from Maya and are therefore a *Vivarta*, a superimposition on the Absolute. Changes in the universe, therefore, are not changes in the Absolute, the Atman, but in Nature, i.e., in manifestation only.

Coming next to the question of individual souls, and their relation to the Absolute, it stands clear from what we have already observed that the one supreme spirit, the Brahman, the Paramatman, appears in the aspect of the Jivatman or individual soul on account of Avidya or ignorance,—a subsidiary result of the cosmic principle of Maya—limiting, and in one sense creating, the individual souls. The operation of this Avidya or ignorance may be said to be twofold, viz., first, it veils off the real nature of the self and its ultimate unity with the Atman ; secondly, it leads to the erroneous fusion of the self with the non-self, which apparently obstructs its infinitude and thus directly becomes the generator of all ideas of 'the self as the agent of all actions,' and consequently becomes the primal cause of all miseries. Thus we see that the individual souls as they are, are not in any sense the creation or even the evolution of the Absolute, neither are they parts of the Absolute ; they are not essentially many, yet they are many ; they are essentially one with the Whole, yet they are other than the Whole. Individual souls are different from Brahman and are bound, so long as they cling to Avidya and its individualising adjuncts. Egoity is bondage, freedom from egoity is Mukti, or what we understand by salvation. It need, however, be distinctly understood here that the real Advaitic position is *not that we have a soul* which is held in bondage by matter and which in freedom is released from that bondage, *but that we are* the very soul ; there is no room in Advaita for such crude ideas of dual existences. We must see ourselves either as the Atman or as the individualised self, but never the two at one time. That we think ourselves as individuals involves a process which may be illustrated by a term borrowed from physical science as the "polarisation of Maya" ; and similarly Mukti or salvation, which means the negation of individual consciousness, as "the neutralisation of Maya." Mukti according to Advaita does not mean reclamation and restitution of lost birthright or any other thing ; it means the effective assertion and realisation of what already exists. So like other systems Advaita Vedanta does not say that we were once free but became somehow bound and have to be free again ; it on the other hand says we are free here and now, only we have to feel and realise it. From the standpoint of Paramartha Tattwa or transcendental existence all ideas of the losing of birthright are little short of hallucination. For, to

suppose that we were once free and somehow lost that freedom is equal to denying our original freedom even. The eternally free could never be bound ; the absolute independent could never be dependent ; and if it were dependent, the very idea of its independence would become a chimera. Such ideas are all in Maya, in the empirical, but never in the Real, the Absolute.

One need not wait for the death of this body, nor need one to go to any sphere here or elsewhere to attain Mukti or liberation. This Mukti, which is but another expression for immortality, is the very principle of our being. Once we know that the personal consciousness falls off and we are no more affected by the chain of causation and the consequent miseries of life and death. The constant effort, therefore, to think of the essential freedom of our being by discriminating it from all that temporarily obstructs the vision of the Truth, till it becomes a fact to us, constitutes Advaita Sadhana. Hence, essentially speaking all ideas of difference between souls and souls, between men, animals, trees and every other thing are but due to the superimposed adjuncts created by the pluralising power of Maya : अग्निर्वयंको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव । एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तर्गता रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिः ॥ "Just as the one fire by entering into the world became many on account of the multiplicity of objects through which it manifested, just so the same Atman became many on account of the diversity of the superimposed adjuncts." All differences, therefore, are in cosmic evolution, in the degrees of soul manifestation, and as such they do not appertain to the Atman in itself. For instance, take a few lamps and put on them chimneys made of different materials, such as of stone, clay, metal, glass, etc., and see what happens. The light in every case is there, burning the same, but on account of the difference in the degrees of transparency in the chimneys we do not see the expression of the light externally alike in each case. Similarly, the different stages in manifestation such as in atoms and molecules, stocks and stones, herbs and trees, germs and insects, animals and men, show but different degrees of the mist created by Maya, which becomes thinnest in the highest evolved men, till that mist entirely disappears and the little individuality merges in the Absolute Unity—the Atman. This is evolution as understood by a Vedantin. Births and deaths, as we see, are only changes from body to body—changes in nature, through which the *individualised being* passes in the process of self-manifestation till at last it is reinstated in its own consciousness and thus realises itself in the One. This is the idea behind what is known as the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul with its parallel in the doctrine of Karma and

Reincarnation, which are almost a universal feature in all systems of Indian thought, excepting perhaps that of the Charvakas only. Reincarnation signifies the same thing as we understand by evolution, and is explained by the doctrine of Karma or individual merits acquired by our actions. All works which tend to keep us bound to the sense-plane, which make us selfish and thus intensify the mist of Maya are bad and have a tendency to drag us down in the scale of evolution works that serve to develop the Sattwika element in us, to make us unselfish, to clarify our vision and direct it inwards from the detractions of matter are good works. Vedanta says that any work done selflessly, without any idea of self-enjoyment or self-gratification, may as well make us pure in heart. And purity is the one condition for the growth of higher spiritual consciousness.

Such, then, are the very basic ideas and practical conclusions of Advaita Vedanta as we find them re-interpreted in the light of modern thought, by that "paragon of Vedantic teachers" in the modern age, Swami Vivekananda. To close this long discourse, it may relevantly be mentioned here that even as it is a distinct school by itself, Advaita has no conflict with other systems of thought, though it unrelentingly controverts and refutes the wrong inferences and conclusions arrived at by others; it only holds out with, and for the sake of logical consistency, the last conclusion of all philosophy, the ultimate generalisation of all science and the final word of all religion. Again, whereas other systems of the world teach morality and ethics as the principal guiding factors in life, it is the glory of Advaita Vedanta alone to furnish the most reasonable and unshakable basis for all such, because it teaches that the whole universe of variety is essentially one in God. For practical purposes of religious life, none the less, Advaita has scope enough to allow the special teachings of all religious systems to have a place in the scheme of spiritual evolution. It teaches that the highest goal is as much attainable by love, work or psychic control as by philosophic discrimination. It is neither unpractical nor destructive as many shallow-minded people seem to think. It teaches mankind how to use the hands, the heart and the head vigorously and in unison. It denies all those pernicious distinctions and privileges which people create between men and men. In the knowledge of the Atman all stand on the same footing; no hatred, no jealousy, none of those invidious distinctions of caste, colour, sects or position: "यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मान्येवानुपश्यति । सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥" "Who sees all beings in the Atman and the Atman in all, for the matter of that he hates none". Intense practicality and keen intellectuality, intense calmness in the midst of intense activity is the

religion of the Vedānta which teaches us to keep our "hand in society and head in solitude". No brooding over weakness and failure, no shrinking from difficulties and obstructions; it is a mistake to think that man is a weakling, a tiny boat helplessly tossed hither and thither by the relentless currents of cause and effect. No, he is the Atman ever-free, remember that and be free. So sings the Sannyasin:—

"Who sows must reap" they say, "and cause must bring
 Its sure effect. Good, good; bad, bad; and none
 Escape the law. But whoso wears a form
 Must wear the chain". Too true; but far beyond
 Both Name and Form is Atman, ever free
 Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! say
 "Om Tat Sat Om."

IBRAHIM BEN ADHEM

By T. S. Avinashilingam, B.A., B.L.

Renunciation and spirituality are not the monopoly of any single people or the possession of any single race. Human nature is the same everywhere, and all over the world man first seeks pleasure, and when he gets it he finds it illusive and insatiable. Petty minds seek enjoyment and spend their lives in thoughtless action and idle dreams. At the end of their little lives, when they feel their strength ebbing away and their senses failing, they recognise how they had wasted their years of strength. In contrast to these there are others whose minds are not attracted by the petty pleasures of the world, whose minds from childhood soar to higher and nobler heights of vision. Such men are few and far between, and they are the salt of the earth. There are still others who begin their life with enjoyment just like the common folk, but who out of experience learn the true nature of the trumpery world and by an act of providence or a thought-provoking incident, make a firm resolve in a moment and giving up all their worldly possessions take to the high road leading to the Most High.

Many times, great minds read in small common incidents lessons of great significance which years of study and observation do not teach us. One experience was sufficient to transform the whole life and being of the great Gautama from one of enjoyment into one of renunciation. So also was the case with the great South Indian saint, Pattinathu Pilliar. He was the very prince among merchants and richer than many kings. One day he read the saying—'Even a broken needle does not go with a man when he dies'; at once the transience

of the world flashed upon his great mind ; and immediately he left all his wealth and possessions and started that very moment in quest of the permanent reality underlying this unstable world. There are others who had in some form or other felt the call of God and in answer, had forsaken all they had in their anxiety and endeavour to gain the divine insight. Ibrahim Ben Adhem, the great saint of Asia Minor, was one of those blessed few who had the call and answered it with a determined heroism.

Ibrahim Ben Adhem was the king and ruler of the prosperous city of Balkh. He possessed everything that a man of this world would crave to possess. He was the ruler of a large kingdom and his power extended through many a province. He had untold wealth at his command. Thousands of men and women were at his beck and call and ready to do his behests. Women and wine were within his reach, and there was no pleasure which he could not obtain. And consistent with the position to which he was born he was leading a princely life full of enjoyment and pleasure and doing his royal duties.

One night he had gone to bed as usual, but had not yet been enwrapped by a heavy slumber, when he heard some body walking over his roofs. He was surprised that any one should be over the roofs at that unearthly hour of the night, and so he cried out, "Who are you on the roof?" A voice replied, "I have lost my camel and I am searching for it here." The prince's surprise knew no bounds at the stupidity of such a search, and so he again said, "You must be a confirmed fool to look for a camel on the roofs of a building." To this the voice replied, "What a greater fool thou must be to be enjoying the world and at the same time seeking the undying reality in it. Is not the enjoyment of royal pleasures and the quest for and seeking God at one and the same moment more absurd than the search for a camel on the roofs of a house?"

Ben Adhem rose from his bed. These words smote him like cold steel. They shook him to his very depths. Slowly he began to understand the real implication of those words. He could not sleep any more that night. Throughout that seemingly endless night, these words were echoing in his troubled mind. At last the day dawned and with it came again the round of princely duties. He washed and dressed himself and went to the court hall. The hall was crowded with the courtiers and the officials of the kingdom. All of them were known to him. But presently he observed an unknown stranger entering the Durbar Hall with a majestic gait. He had not seen the new comer before, nor the like of him in physique and personality. When the stranger had approached him sufficiently near, the prince asked him, "Who are you? What has brought you here?"

"I am a stranger," the new comer answered, "and I wish to stay in this rest house". "This is not a rest house," said the prince "but my own palace." "To whom did it belong before you came into possession of it?" queried the stranger. "To my fathers," replied the prince. "To whom did it belong before thy father?" "To my grand father." "To whom did it belong before thy grand father?" "To my other ancestors." "What has become of those ancestors?" "They are dead." "Then" said the mysterious intruder, "is this anything more than a hotel and a rest house, where people come in, rest for a while and then pass out of it?"—So saying he disappeared.

The prince searched for him everywhere, but could not find him. But yet the words of the stranger had gone home into his mind. The ideas that were implied in the stranger's words were so new, so strange and so different from his usual conceptions, that he was dazed, confused and confounded for a time. His mind was in a great tumult. He felt that the very ground under his feet was being cut off. The ideas cherished through life were undergoing dissolution. The favourite conception of wealth and possession and the complacent ignorance which presumed eternal existence for the physical body—all these were being undermined by the truth expressed in the simple words of that august stranger. Slowly he began to understand that dissolution and death were the inevitable end of all things. He felt that he had wasted a life-time in petty indulgences, and thus an overwhelming fear of the end of all earthly things seized his mind.

But the ideas of a life-time are not shaken off in a moment. Ibrahim did not get final conviction. Doubts troubled him and his mind was on the rack. He could not come to any conclusion as to what was the right thing to do. To avoid this mental discomfort and worry, he resolved to divert his mind to outward things by sensational pleasures. He had always derived acute pleasure in hunting and so he gathered a huge army of hunters, noblemen and courtiers, mounted his best horse and set out on an hunting expedition.

His horse was as chafing and restless as his mind, and it was not long when he outstripped the rest of the party and rode with lightning speed into the forest in hot pursuit of a game. He followed an animal deep into the forests in a lonely forest path. He was in the very heat of the hunt when he heard a voice calling to him, 'O Ibrahim, thou wast not made for this,' but he heeded it not. Again the voice called to him in the same words; this time he stopped and looked on all sides, but could not find the man from whom those words might have fallen. Suddenly the thought flashed on his mind that it was the Lord that was calling upon him to follow the divine path. It is the Lord that commandeth, his servant will obey,' he

said and got down from his royal steed. He went to the nearest shepherd and begged him to accept his princely apparel and steed for his beggarly one, and thus exchanging the clothes he went out into the wide world as a monk and a fakir.

He had come to understand the real end of all material things. The idea of death got firmly implanted in his mind. Every moment he was conscious of his end. Once when he was passing near a cemetery, a man on a horse came and asked him to show him the nearest human habitation. Ibrahim pointed to the cemetery. When he was asked the reason for his queer behaviour, he said, "Everyday the cemetery becomes more and more peopled, while the town and its most flourishing quarters are continually falling into ruin." This idea far from making him weak and pessimistic gave him greater strength and goaded him on to spiritual endeavours. He learned the value of time and spent whole day in prayer, meditation and contemplation, in his efforts to realise the undying reality.

After many such years a desire came into his mind to go to and visit the holy city of Mecca, where the prophet had lived, preached and died. Mecca was full of holy associations of the life of the prophet and the sacred Kaaba. And to that city he yearned to go. Accordingly he started. The news of his advent had reached the ears of the elders of the city, and they gathered at the city gates with all their honours to greet the arrival of the guest whom they had long longed to see and honour. When Ibrahim reached there, he observed the crowd and enquired the reason for such a gathering and was told that they had come to meet him. To that Ibrahim said, "Why make so much ado about that man, who is both a sinner and infidel?" The people of the town mistaking him for one who cavilled at the great saint, soundly belaboured him. Ibrahim without disclosing his identity calmly bore the blows and went his way. The townfolk afterwards knew their mistake, repented their folly and craved his forgiveness.

His life at Mecca was one of infinite love, perseverance and service. Everyday he went into the forest, brought fuel, and selling it for a few pieces of silver bought some foodstuffs. And these he shared with others. But all the time his mind rested on God. The work disciplined his limbs and his body, and at the same time, his mind with a fervour unknown to ordinary men sought the divine reality. In spite of the greatest hardship, he never lost his faith in the Lord for a single moment; but these only increased the love of God in his devout heart. By regarding all work high and low as service to the Most High, he purified himself of all attachment, till he came to the stage when he regarded God only as the reality in life. Even the attachment to wife and son, so hard to overcome even by men of

renunciation, he gave up in preference to the single-minded devotion to the Lord.

This love for the Lord inspired him with a mighty spirit of renunciation. Once in answer to a query he said, "I have bought the position of a dervish at the price of a kingdom, and I find I have made a good bargain." He used to constantly warn the seekers of truth against getting into the meshes of the world. Once he asked a dervish, "Have you wife and children?" "No," answered the dervish. "It is then all well for thee." "Why so?" asked the dervish. "Because," said Ibrahim, "every time a dervish marries, he is like one who embarks on a boat; but when children are born to him, he is like one drowning." When offers of money were made to him to make his life easy and pleasant, he regarded them as the temptations of Satan. When one offered him a few thousand gold pieces to make him above wants, he hotly refused it saying, "Doubtless you wish by this means to erase my name from the list of dervishes." To another man of wealth he said, "You are rich, but still seek to increase your wealth, and thus more wretched than many a poor man. See me I possess nothing and I ask nothing of any one. I have aspired after the condition of a dervish and I have found mines of treasure in it."

This one-minded devotion to the Lord did not make him turn his back to the world and retire into the forests. He lived and laboured among the men of the world and sought to serve them in all possible ways. He saw the divine in man and looked upon all men and women as the children of the great Lord of the universe. Constantly he was found working for his brethren and helping them in all possible ways. He often forgot himself in their services. He spared not the body or his mind, if he could be of the least possible assistance to any.

There is a beautiful legend about him, which the poet Leigh Hunt has immortalised in his poem :

"Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase !)
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
 And saw within the moonlight of his room,
 Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,
 An angel writing in a book of gold.
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
 And to the presence in the room he said :
 'What writest thou ?' The vision raised its head,
 And with a look made all of sweet accord
 Answered, 'The names of those who love the Lord.'
 'And is mine one,' said Abou. 'Nay, not so',
 Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low

But cheerly still ; and said, 'I pray thee then
 Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.'
 The Angel wrote and vanished. The next night
 He came again with a great wakening light,
 And showed the names whom love of God had blest
 And lo ! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

DYNAMIC SPIRIT OF RELIGION

By Brahmachari Shraddha Chaitanya

To-day every field of human activity is imbued with a spirit of dynamism. It is evident to even a cursory eye. Not only in India but all the world over man is forging ahead in philosophy, religion, art, science, literature, history and other branches of knowledge with a spirit of tremendous tenacity as if the sleeping leviathan of mankind has awakened since the birth of modern era which may be rightly called the Age of Dynamism.

But the question of questions is—Has this dynamic spirit any room in religion or in other words, is religion dynamic? We shall here very carefully avoid the hair-splitting philosophical speculation which would be simply repulsive to the young minds with whom we are at present concerned but try to arrive at a natural common-sense solution of the problem. The root meaning of the word religion is "re—again, ligo—to bind", *i.e.*, that which binds man again with God. This much we can declare with certainty that an individual or nation that disregards the truths of religion is doomed to destruction. It is for this reason that the glorious civilizations of Greece, Rome, Alexandria, Chaldea, Babylonia and many others in the past were obliterated from the face of the earth leaving their marks on the pages of history ; and many in the present, those of the West and her imitators are tottering on the verge of immediate ruin. But India that founded and evolved her great civilization on the bed-rock of religion has through ages survived all other nations in spite of incessant foreign invasions both political and cultural. And for this she has been the adorable mother of all religions of this world. That is why the Swami Vivekananda said in a lecture before a western audience, "I belong to a religion of which Christianity is an offshoot and Buddhism a rebel-child." By religion the great Swami meant the Upanishadic religion or Vedanta the oldest one on earth. And Buddhism like many other reform movements in modern India is a branch of that Vedanta, and influenced greatly the Semitic religions

and almost all other creeds and sects outside India. That even Taoism, the ancient religion of Lao-tze, is a Chinese adaptation of our Upanishadic Religion has been authenticated by the Jesuit Father Weiger in his learned French work. In the catholic bosom of Vedanta there is not only universal toleration and acceptance of all sects and creeds of the past and present but of infinite variety to come in future. For in order to be universal a religion must be infinitely plastic and elastic. A universal religion must be dynamic for practical religion is all inclusive and in its entirety means the simultaneous culture of body, mind and spirit of which a man is a combination. So Swamiji defines practical Vedanta as the commingling of intense activity with intense meditation. Vedanta is dynamic in every way. This expansion of religion covering the whole human life individually or collectively is his contribution to the philosophical and religious thought of the world. He called this 'Dynamic religion' or 'Practical Vedanta'. Dr. Paul Deussen—the famous German Indologist in his introduction to the philosophy of the Upanishads has hinted this great truth of modern thought that from to-day every thought system is to be critically studied and expounded in the light of Vedanta. This is the bold challenge of Indian thought to the world.

It is a happy sign of the times that many Western scholars are appreciating our Indian culture which may be known from the following lines of Mr. J. H. Tuckwell's *Reality and Religion*:—

"In our main conclusions we have long ago been anticipated by the religious philosophy of India. In the West our philosophy has been surely but slowly moving to the same inevitable monistic goal. In Professor Ladd of Harvard University we have a notable western thinker, who by a process of careful and consistent reasoning, concrete in character has also arrived at the conclusion that the ultimate Reality must be conceived of as an Absolute Self of which we are finite forms or appearances. But it is the crowning glory of the Vedanta that it so long ago announced, reiterated and emphasised the deep truth in a manner that does not permit us for a moment to forget it or explain it away. This great stroke of identity, this discernment of ultimate Reality of all things in the Brahman or the one Absolute Self seems to us to constitute the masterpiece and highest achievement of India's wonderful metaphysical and religious genius, to which the West has yet to pay the full tribute which is its due."

And how this Vedanta can harmonise all religions can be learnt from the great life of Sri Ramakrishna—the Guru of Vivekananda, who for a prolonged period of twelve years practised almost all existing faiths such as Islam, Christianity, Vaishnavism, Shaktatism, etc., one after another and realised the Supreme Unity taught by Vedanta. But

that is a marvellous life-story unprecedented in human history. He lived in one single life what the whole humanity lived for ages. Now the task before the Indian youths is to make a special study of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda who alone among the galaxy of Indian reformers recognised and preached to us the genius of Indian culture in its truest spirit. There is no doubt a little national awakening in Bengal, Madras and some other parts of the country but, that is merely a western imitation. It is Swami Vivekananda who alone thundered from many pulpits and platform that religion and religion alone is the life-blood of India and every minute bit of activity in India must be based on religion. For the goal of Indian society is preeminently the collective preservation, realisation and preaching of the supreme knowledge.

Strength of body, mind and spirit is what we want, and to get that strength we have to uphold the Upanishads and believe in the potential divinity of man. Wittingly or unwittingly man gets inspiration for activity in every walk of life from religion and Vedanta is the dynamo of infinite strength for body, mind and soul. For it teaches that the Jiva and Brahman are the same. The students at the desk, the professor in the lecture hall, the teacher in the school, the scientist in the laboratory, the mechanic in the workshop, the cooly in the street, the worshippers in the temple, church or mosque and men of every walk of life will fare far better with Vedantic teachings. Even a saannyasin without this lofty idealism in his spiritual life can hardly forge ahead, and this lack of virility in some millions of monks in India has made them idle dreamers to-day. The same is the case with an organisation or a nation. When a Sangha, religious or social, loses dynamic spirit it comes to ruin. All strength is life, weakness is death. All sorts of sins, crimes, and vile actions are but different modification of weakness. So all these can only be remedied by the cultivation of strength.

To search after freedom is to search after religion. Vedanta guarantees freedom, physical, mental and spiritual, to its adherents. Freedom is strength. Is not life itself a quest after freedom? What is called evolution of life is nothing but securing of freedom from the grip of matter. And the highest freedom is called Brahman in Vedanta. Vedanta teaches that man is the living embodiment of absolute freedom which we are already. Young minds want the taste of power. They love those things which require the greatest manifestation of strength. Vedanta assures us that spiritual realisation is the manliest of games. So the scriptures say that self-conquest is the biggest conquest. When we identify ourselves with body and mind which are but finite modes of Atman, we are bound but when with

spirit, our real transcendent Swarupa, we enjoy infinite strength and freedom. This is the message—the greatest message that any scripture or saviour can deliver unto the world.

Once Professor Earnest Hornwatz of the New York Hunter College who came to India in 1928 as Govt. of Bombay Research Scholar in Indo-Iranian antiquities addressed the youths at Sakti Ashram at Dehradun thus—" Reinterpret the tenets of Vedanta to yourself and you will be what you were in the past. I am disappointed with India. The Indian youths need an inner awakening—the rousing of Sakti in order to take their proper place in the struggle of life. They are not free you say but just the thrill of liberty is damped and stifled in them (partly owing to alien rule I admit but largely because they are unable to assimilate the glorious traditions of a cultural past). I just think of Yajñavalkya, Sankara and Chaitanya. It is necessary to awaken Sakti in them to make them artistically and spiritually big and modern." It is this spirit of dynamism that can make Indians a nation of real men, and the teachings of Vedanta, the religion of India, do not lack in this spirit. In fact it proclaims in clear and emphatic voice that man is in essence of the very nature of God and therefore a mine of infinite strength. It exhorts all to assert this divine strength latent in the soul of man and thus be saved from all kinds of weakness, mental, moral and spiritual. It is because India has forgotten this aspect of Vedanta that she has been in bondage for several centuries, and the surer way therefore of liberating her from this thralldom is to bring into play the dynamic spirit of Vedanta in the life of our people.

SELECTIONS FROM THE ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

[Adhyatma Ramayana is an ancient Hindu religious work composed by the illustrious sage Visvamitra. It is in the form of discourses by Maheswara to his consort Uma and while it strictly conforms to the outline of the story of Sri Rama as detailed by Valmiki, the King of Epics, its chief feature and value lie in the very valuable prayers and expositions of metaphysical problems with which the narrative is very copiously interspersed. They throw a flood of light on the nature of God, soul and nature and present a happy blending of the essential doctrines of dualism and monism. They have also an inspiring effect on the reader who becomes imbued with wisdom, devotion and dispassion. This book is very widely read in Northern India and was strongly recommended by Sri Ramakrishna

Paramahansa Dev. For the benefit of our English knowing readers we propose to collect only the prayers and the philosophical expositions and publish their translation in small instalments in the Vedanta Kesari. The Slokas will be published in Sanskrit characters and a faithful rendering in English will be subjoined, giving reference to chapter and number of the Slokas. Ed. V.K.]

BALAKANDA

Chapter II.

Maheswara speaking to Uma of Rama's greatness narrated to her a conversation that took place on this subject between Sita and Hanuman after Rama's return from exile and his coronation. Rama was seated on the throne surrounded by sages like Vasishtha and friends and allies like Sugriva and Vibhishana. Hanuman with folded hands and his mind free from all desires stood in front of Rama with a desire to be blessed with Jnanam ; Sri Rama coming to know of it asked Sita to declare to him the highest truth.

Sita said to Anjaneya (Hanuman) :

रामं विद्धिपरं ब्रह्म सच्चिदानन्दमद्वयम्
सर्वोपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं सत्तामात्रमगोचरम् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. Knowest thou that Sri Rama is Supreme Self, the Existence—Knowledge—Bliss Absolute. He is one without a second, devoid of all adjuncts, pure existence and beyond perception.¹

[1. i.e., of senses, mind and intellect.]

आनन्दं निर्भलं शांतं निर्विकारं निरञ्जनं
सर्वव्यापिनमात्मानं स्वप्रकाशमकल्मषं ॥ ३३ ॥

33. He is blissful, pure, tranquil, changeless, stainless, all-pervading, the Supreme Self, self-illuminated and sinless.

मां विद्धि मूलप्रकृतिं सर्गस्थित्यन्तकारिणीं
तस्य सन्निधिमक्षिणं सृजामीदमतद्रिता ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Knowest thou me as the primordial Nature¹ (Mula Prakriti), the cause of creation, protection and dissolution of the universe. Due to His proximity alone, I create this universe with the greatest promptness on my part².

[1. i. e. the material cause of the universe ; it is not independent of the Lord but is His Maya Sakti of inscrutable nature.

2. The power of creation, etc., that is manifest in Prakriti is not her own, but derived from Ishwara with whom she is eternally associated ; just as magical power is of no avail without the will of the magician possessing it, so also Prakriti is not capable of manifestation without the will of the Lord.]

तत्सान्निध्यान्मया सृष्टं तस्मिन्नारोप्यतेऽबुधैः
अयोध्यानगरे जन्म रघुवंशेऽतिनिर्मले ॥ ३५ ॥

विश्वामित्रसहायत्वं मखसंरक्षणं ततः
 अहत्याशापगमनं चापभंगे महेशितुः ॥ ३६ ॥
 मत्पाणिग्रहणं पश्चाद्भार्गवस्यमदक्षयः
 अयोध्यानगरे वासो मया द्वादशवार्षिकः ॥ ३७ ॥
 दंडकारण्यगमनं विराधवध एवच
 मायामारीचमरणं मायासीतः हतिस्तथा ॥ ३८ ॥
 जटायुषोमोक्षलाभः कबंधस्यतयैवच
 शबर्याः पूजनं पश्चात्सुग्रीवेण समागमः ॥ ३९ ॥
 वालिनश्चवधः पश्चात्सीतान्वेषणमेवच
 सेतुवन्धश्च जलधौ लंकायाश्च निरोधनं ॥ ४० ॥
 रावणस्य वधोयुद्धे सपुत्रस्य दुरात्मनः
 विभीषणे राज्यदानं पुष्पकेण मया सह ॥ ४१ ॥
 अयोध्यागमनं पश्चाद्वाज्ये रामाभिषेचनं
 एवमादीनि कर्माणि मयैवाचरितान्यपि
 आरोपयति रामेऽस्मिन्निर्विकारेऽखिलात्मनि ॥ ४२ ॥

35—42. What has been created by me by virtue of my being in His proximity, ignorant people ascribe to Him. The birth of Sri Rama in the lineage of Raghu of unblemished purity in the city of Ayodhya, and acts like accompanying Visvamisra to protect his Yajna (sacrifice) from the ravages of Rakshsas (evil spirits), emancipating Ahalya from her cursed state, breaking Siva's bow, marrying me, humbling the pride of Parasurama, living with me in Ayodhya for twelve years, going to the Dandaka forest in exile, slaying Viradha, killing Mareecha who came in the guise of a deceptive deer and the (consequent) abduction of the illusory Sita, the attainment of *Moksha* (salvation) by Jatayu as well as by Kabandha, Sabari's adoration and later on contracting friendship with Sugriva, slaying Vali, searching after Sita, constructing the bridge across the sea and besieging Lanka (Ceylon), destroying the wicked Ravana along with his son in battle, installing Vibhishana on the throne returning with me to Ayodhya on the Pushpaka chariot and afterwards the coronation of Rama—these and other such acts were actually performed by me : whereas they are ascribed to Sri Rama, the ever changeless Supreme Self.

रामो न गच्छति न तिष्ठति नानुशोच-
 त्याक्वांचते त्यजति नोनकरोति किंचित् ॥
 आनन्दमुर्तिरचलः परिणामहीनो
 मायागुणाननुगतो हि तथा विभाति ॥ ४३ ॥

43. Sri Rama does not move, nor is he stationary ; He neither grieves nor craves for anything ; He has nothing to discard or to perform ; He is bliss embodied, immovable and immutable ; and yet he appears to be under the influence of the attributes of Maya.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

SARDA'S CHILD MARRIAGE PREVENTION BILL

The passing of Sarda's Marriage Bill fixing the marriageable age of girls at 14 and of boys at 18 has created a sensation among the orthodox section of India's population. Although the Bill appears quite sane and sober to an unprejudiced mind, the upholders of orthodoxy all over the country see in it nothing but the beginning of moral chaos and social disruption. Such fears we feel sure are entirely unfounded. Our orthodox friends must have too poor an estimate of the moral worth of their sisters and daughters if they think that they will go astray if left without a jealous guardian in the shape of a husband for a year or two after reaching maturity. The cultural atmosphere of Hindu homes has not gone so far down as to justify any such fear. And we have even now among many cultured communities of India the custom of marrying girls at a much later age than 14 and yet we know that the moral standard in such communities is in no way lower for it.

Again it is feared in some quarters that girls if left unmarried at an early age will under the influence of modern ideas develop an attitude entirely hostile to marriage and that many may thus prefer to remain single and lead questionable lives instead of assuming the responsibilities of married life. This fear however is based on the state of affairs prevailing in the West and need not necessarily be true with regard to India where traditions and conditions of life differ. At least in those communities where late marriages are in vogue such reluctance on the part of women is not observed. Moreover India must adjust her system of education for women in such a way that while it imparts to them the knowledge of modern sciences and arts, it must also inculcate into them the high traditions of India regarding personal purity and sacredness of married life. For purity of life is really effective and even deserves that name only when it is voluntary and is the result of enlightenment and education, and not when it is enforced by imprisonment or surveillance. If as a result of right education a few women prefer to remain unmarried out of a desire for a higher life, society will only gain all the more by their life and example.

We do not however question the sincerity of the opponents of this measure. Their sincerity itself is however the result of the hypnotic spell that a longstanding custom has on the human mind. But for this their minds would have been horrified by the unwholesome influence that this custom has on the physique and the educational prospect of their girls, and they would have given it up altogether long ago even without government interference. But in the interests of the nation at large such interference was necessary as the orthodox sections were not in a mood to shift an inch from their time-honoured customs. While therefore causing some unpleasantness to the conservative people, the Bill has saved the liberal-minded from the persecutions of society the fear of which alone had formerly forced them to marry their girls at an early age even though they know perfectly that it was a pernicious custom. And now that the traditional idea about the marriageable age of girls has been broken, the force of modern economic conditions would naturally raise it to an age higher

than fourteen and thus leave ample time for their education. All over the country a regular propaganda should be carried on to bring home to the minds of the people the great benefits that society will in time derive from this legislation by way of better education and better physique for the womanhood of the country. Then alone the object of the Bill will be fully realised.

For the new-fledged Indian nation the Bill is significant in another way also. Ever since the Hindus lost their national independence their society has for the last thousand years been left without an authority to initiate new social legislations calculated to bring the society in tune with up-to-date social influences. In olden days when Hindus had their own kings, the latter along with the wise men of the time fulfilled this function. But such is the perversity of man's conservatism, that before long the die-hard elements of the upper classes into whose hands the destinies of society fell, found in the existing Smrities a divine sanction and thus treated them as irrevocable at least for an indefinitely long period of time even though society might have in the meantime outgrown the needs of the injunctions laid down in those texts. Thus while during the time of Hindu independence new Smrities were written to suit the changing requirements of time, such a phenomenon came to be regarded as sacrilegious in later times. The foreign rulers of India either because they did not take sufficient interest in the welfare of the people or because they felt incompetent to interfere with the social institutions of alien religionists followed a policy of non-intervention and the result was that before long Indian society became the nursery of obsolete customs and time-worn institutions. The present social legislation initiated by a people's representative and sanctioned by the Government is an indication of changing conditions under which the Government is more and more coming to reflect the popular will. Such healthy legislations are from time to time necessary in a country like India where conservatism and worship of worn-out customs in the name of religion have for centuries been acting as a clog on national progress.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI VIVIDISHANANDA IN AMERICA

The public are already aware that Swami Vividishananda, a member of the R. K. Mission, after visiting various places of note and interest, has recently reached America to take up the work at the Vedanta Society, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A. He has been actively assisting Swami Phabhavananda who is now in charge of the Society there. Both are regularly holding classes and delivering lectures every week for the spread of the Vedantic ideals and it is gratifying to note that the attendance is daily on the increase. The need of active workers for the propagation of the truths of Hinduism and especially those of the Vedanta in the West can hardly be exaggerated. For it is through this kind of missionary activities that the true ideals of our cultural life can be implanted in the western minds and the queer and wrong notions entertained by them about our life and culture can be removed. We sincerely believe that vigorous efforts in this line shall produce their desired result. May Lord bless the activities of the new Swami with success.

RECEPTION TO SWAMI MADHAVANANDA IN CALCUTTA

Swami Madhavananda who was in charge of the Vedanta Centre at San Francisco for a couple of years has recently returned to India.

An address of welcome was presented to the Swami on behalf of the citizens of Calcutta on Monday the 21st October, 1929, at the Albert Hall. The meeting was presided over by Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, the Mayor of the Corporation of Calcutta. The welcome address among other things contained the following :—"The fostering solicitude of the early apostles of the Ramakrishna Order drew out your innate spiritual powers, and in the fullness of time you were called upon to go to the people of America as the teacher of Eternal Religion, the only role in which the worthy sons of the holy Bharatabarsha appear from time to time before the nations of the world. Your indefatigable energy, purity and simplicity of life, your breadth of vision and spiritual fervour crowned with success your ministrations at the Hindu Temple of San Francisco." The Swami in course of his reply emphasised the need of mass education. It was impossible, he said, to achieve highest freedom in life so long one was steeped into illiteracy. He made an impassioned appeal to all sections of Indian thinkers to merge all their differences and create such an atmosphere and a spirit among different Indians that there might not be any room for sectarian or communal discord in India. People in America had been roused by the publication of Miss Mayo's book and they were anxious to know of India and of the fight for freedom that was going on here and therefore it was incumbent upon the Indians to unite to achieve both physical and spiritual comforts and happiness. Mr. Sen Gupta in course of his thoughtful presidential address complimented the Swami for the noble service he has rendered to the cause of Hinduism and urged upon the necessity of a harmonious blending of the intense meditation of the East and the ceaseless activities of the West.

With a vote of thanks to the chair the meeting came to a close.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA SAMAJ, CUDDAPAH

The 19th Anniversary of the Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah, was celebrated with great eclat on the 21st and 22nd instant. The President of the Samaj writes :—

Srimat Swami Yatiswaranandaji, President of the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, came down here specially for the purpose on the 20th instant, and he stayed here till the 24th. He laid the foundation stone on the morning of 21st instant for further improvements to the main buildings of the Samaj, while in the evening of the same day there was a public lecture in the Samaj by M.R.Ry. K. S. Ramaswami Sastriar A.L., B.A., B.L., our popular District Judge, 'On the Place of Ramakrishna Movement in the Life of India', with Swamiji in the chair. The meeting was well attended, and the distinguished lecturer held the audience spell-bound throughout by his most interesting and illuminating address on the contribution made by the Mission of Sri Ramakrishna Dey towards the spiritual uplift of the motherland. While bringing the day's function to a close the Swamiji delivered a neat little speech exhorting every one to walk in the path of the Lord with a life full of energy and of practical wisdom.

The next day's programme began with the opening of the new buildings of the Depressed Class Labourers' Free Night School recently built by the Samaj at a cost of Rs. 1,400 half of which was borne by the District Educational Council. In the evening there was again

a public lecture by His Holiness Swami Yatiswaranandaji on 'The Message of Dynamic Hinduism' and the District Judge presided on the occasion. The Swamiji's soul-stirring address on the potentiality of our ancient religion, held the audience spell-bound.

On the evening of the 23rd instant, the Swamiji visited the local Municipal High School and addressed the students a few words about 'Religion and its place in student life'. M.R.Ry. K. S. Ramaswami Sastriar Avl., B.A., B.L., District Judge, who was also kind enough to be present on the occasion, supplemented Swamiji's address with an exhortation to the students to lead a life of purity and of integrity of character.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK

We are glad to announce that the harvesting of the autumnal rice crop having been finished in the flood-stricken areas of Sylhet and Cachar and labourers finding employment, we have discontinued the relief work in Assam since the 28th September, after distributing rice for two weeks in advance. Hut-construction has also been finished in all the centres. The relief work in the Midnapur District will be continued up to the end of October. In Akyab (Burma) the work will go on till December. At present 10,000 people are receiving doles every week. Up to the 20th September 3 000 patients have been treated. We are also distributing fodder. Hut-construction is to commence from this month.

We offer out hearty thanks to all who have helped us to bring the Assam relief work to a successful completion.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA,

15th Oct., 1929.

Secretary, R. K. Mission.

THE FIFTH GENERAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION (1926—1927)

The Ramakrishna order of Sannyasins, with its head-quarters fixed at Belur Math, Howrah, Bengal, is the organisation started by Swami Vivekananda to practise and to propagate the great spiritual truths of Hinduism as exemplified and interpreted in the life of his great Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Accordingly it has for its objects the twin ideals of Siva and Seva or Renunciation and Service. The Report furnishes an account of the twofold activity of the Math and the Mission under two separate sections: section I. deals with permanent institutions (Maths and Ashramas) for missionary work, viz., preaching and publishing books and periodicals and Section II deals with the activities of the Mission proper, which are mainly philanthropic and educational.

SECTION I

(1) Ramakrishna Math, Belur: it is a place of training for Sannyasins and Brahmacharins; and practice of meditation, study of scriptures, Seva, Bhajanam and worship form the principal items of discipline. Swamies trained at the Math are sent to various parts of India and America to preach the Gospel of Vedanta. The birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and important Hindu festivals like Durga Puja are celebrated here with great éclat.

(2) The Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Benares City: situated in the holy atmosphere of the spiritual capital of India it attracts many monks and Brahmacharins for Sadhana. Regular classes, open to the

public also, are held six days a week on the Gita, Vedanta, Upanishads and the works of Swami Vivekananda.

(3) The Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora: this is an important place of meditation as well as of work. The Ashrama started for studying and practising of the Advaita Vedanta avoids the performance of all dualistic rituals and worships. It is the most important centre of publication in the Mission and maintains a branch at Calcutta for this purpose. It also conducts a Charitable Dispensary.

(4) The Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras: its work has been varied and extensive. Besides meditation, study, pooja, etc., the Swamies hold public classes, go on lecturing tours and undertake relief work. It is an important centre of publication, both in English and Tamil. It is conducting a Charitable Dispensary.

There are twenty-five other centres of this type in different parts of India. Besides, there are eight foreign centres—seven in America and one in Federated Malaya States. There are nine Swamies of the Order working in these centres.

Publications: (1) Udbodhan (in Bengali), (2) Prabuddha Bharat (in English), (3) Samanvay (in Hindi), (4) Vedanta Kesari (in English), (5) Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam (in Tamil), (6) Prabuddha Keralam (in Malayalam), (7) The Morning Star (English Weekly), (8) The Message of the East (in English). Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, writings and speeches of other Swamies of the Order, and translations of Hindu Scriptures with texts are published in English and Vernaculars from various centres.

SECTION II

Mission Proper

A

Headquarters at Belur: (1) Philanthropic Activities, viz., Charitable Dispensary treating nearly 20 thousand cases annually, and temporary relief operations in 18 places affected by famines, fires, tornadoes, epidemics, etc. (2). Educational Activities, viz., an Industrial school with a free boarding house having at present 15 boys who are given elementary education together with a course of practical training in weaving, dyeing, tailoring and carpentry.

B

Permanent Institutions for Philanthropic work (Affiliated to the Mission):—1. The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares; it has an Indoor General Hospital with 108 beds, a Refuge for aged men accommodating 25 persons, a Refuge for Women Invalids accommodating 12 persons, a Girls' Home training seven orphan girls to lead a life of renunciation and service, and a Home for paralytic patients, a Dharma Sala for poor strangers, and an Outdoor Dispensary treating over 20 thousand cases annually. Besides, it does outdoor help to invalids and poor ladies of respectable families and casual relief in the shape of passage money, clothing, etc., to distressed pilgrims and travellers.

There are fifteen other centres of this type of different degrees of usefulness.

Permanent Institutions for Educational Work (Affiliated to the Mission):—(1) The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras: it maintains a free Boarding Home accommodating 122 boys, a Residential High School and an Industrial school teaching

Carpentry and Cabinet-making, and Mechanical Foreman and Fitter's Work. (2) The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta accommodating 25 college students free of charge. (3) The Sister Nivedita Girls' School: there were 300 students in 1927. It is not affiliated to any University. It seeks to impart an education which, while equipping the girls with modern ideas, would also intensify in them their national ideals and a spirit of service.

There are seven more such institutions in different parts of India.

During the period under review the first Convention of the Ramakrishna Mission representing 121 institutions was convened at the Belur Math in April 1926 to discuss the ideas and ideals of the Mission and to devise means for better co-operation and co-ordination among the various centres whose numbers are rapidly increasing day-by-day. After the Convention the Governing Body appointed a Working Committee to assist them in the management of the affairs of the Math and Mission, subject to the laws to be prescribed for its guidance from time to time.

The Mission sustained serious losses during the period by the death of some of its most revered and tried workers. Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the beloved and able Secretary of the Mission from its very inception, passed away on the 19th of August 1927. Swami Prakasananda, Swami Subhananda and Swami Sachchidananda are the other persons who passed away during the period.

In conclusion the authorities of the Mission express their thanks to all its helpers and friends, and appeal to the generous public to continue to give the Mission the same kind of co-operation and help which they have given it so unstintedly in the past.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Indian Aesthetics : by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri ; published by Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam ; price Rs. 2.

The name of Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri is well-known to the public as an erudite writer on subjects connected with Indian culture. In his present book he tries to remedy a long-felt want by giving a history as well as an exposition of the theory of Indian Aesthetic doctrines. The misconception is already abroad that Indians have no concepts of beauty, arts, and aesthetics, and from some quotations in Mr. Sastri's book we learn that even veteran Sanskrit scholars like Prof. Max Muller held similar opinions. The present book is an able refutation of this misconception. Mr. Sastri shows that Indian art and aesthetics have a history extending over thousands of years, and with the help of elaborate quotations from original writings he gives a very scholarly exposition of the Indian aesthetic doctrine of *Rasa*. He further elaborates the significance of this concept of *Rasa* by an investigation into its application in all fine arts like poetry, dancing, music, painting, sculpture, etc., and finally expounds its meaning in the realm of Indian metaphysics. According to Mr. Sastri there is a connection between physical, aesthetic and spiritual joy. The perception of *Rasa* through the *annamaya* and *pranamaya kosas* (material body) is physical enjoyment ; the enjoyment of *Rasa* through the *manomaya kosa* and *vignanamaya kosa* (subtle body) is aesthetic

enjoyment ; when the Atman realises its *Rasa* through *anandamaya kosa* or perceives it of itself without any obstruction it is spiritual bliss. This view of Mr. Sastri is quite striking and original. The book is remarkable for the originality and the depth of scholarship displayed in it.

Kamma : by Bhikkhu Silacara ; published by Messrs Earnest Benn Ltd. Bouveril House, 154 Fleet Street, London ; price 6 d.

In this small book of 42 pages we get a very lucid presentation of the theory of Kamma (in Sanserit Karma), in the light of the Lord Buddha's teachings. The matter is so carefully analysed and so clearly presented that it can be easily comprehended by even a beginner. The author has ably refuted the misconception spread by Christian missionaries that the theory of Karma is nothing but a philosophy of fatalism. Any person who tries to make a study of Indian religions and philosophies must first of all have a clear idea of the theory of Karma which forms their very basis, and the present book, we feel sure, will exactly be the book they may profitably study to begin with.

The Pathway to God : by Dinshaw S. Paowalla ; published by L. N. Fowler & Co., 7, Imperial Arcade, Ludgate Circus, E. C. 4., London.

This little book gives many practical hints on spiritual life. It is not written in any sectarian spirit, but based on universal principles of ethics and spirituality acceptable to the followers of all sects and creeds.

Philosophy of Marriage : by William R. Thurston ; published by S. Ganesan & Co., Triplicane, Madras ; 83 pages. As. 12 only.

This startling book reveals in most clear and serious words the sexual abuses prevalent in married life as it obtains in the world at the present time. After spending many years in studying laws and customs relating to married life in various countries of the world, Mr. Thurston comes to the conclusion that most of the ills and miseries of the world at the present time are due to sexual excesses and unnatural sexual practices indulged in by people in married life and outside it. The conclusions are elaborately stated in their various phases and as they affect men and women, and their progeny, he has also given the grave dangers attendant on the practice of birth control which is unfortunately being at present propagated by faddists with a zeal worthy of a nobler cause. Mr. Thurston also gives some remedies for this state of things of which the most important one is the suggestion that married couple should always sleep in separate rooms and should live together only when both desire progeny. The book contains many more suggestions. All persons interested in their welfare as well as that of humanity at large will profit much by a perusal of this book.

Dialogues in an Ashrama : by A. H. Jaisingani ; published by Ganesh & Co., Madras : 82 pages.

In the shape of a conversation between three persons the author puts forward the current views regarding the solutions of modern world problems. There are first of all the believers in the past expecting the revival of the ancient spiritual message in the shape of a new dispensation preached by a future world prophet. But the upholders of modern science have no faith in the spiritual ideal ; they

put their faith in scientific advancement. But the prostitution of science for destructive purposes has filled the minds of some others with a disbelief in its pretensions, and they look forward for the evolution of a new species of humanity called the Super-man, combining in himself both scientific insight and spiritual vision. The author seems to put faith in the third alternative. Some suggestive hints regarding the relationship between art and asceticism are also given.

Cow-protection in India : by L. L. Sundara Ram, M. A. ; published by the South Indian Humanitarian League; No. 436, Mint Street, George Town, Madras. Page 202. Price Rs 2.

In this book the problem of cow-protection in India has been discussed from the standpoints of the various important religions of this country, like Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism and Buddhism, as well as from those of humanitarian principles and medical opinion. The author's conclusion is that according to Indian religion like Hinduism, Jainism, etc., and according to Zoroastrianism the cow stands only next to god in point of holiness, and that as such its slaughter can on no account be tolerated by the votaries of these faiths. As for Islam he shows that sacrifice of cows is not a necessary ritual according to its tenets, that the use of beef was unknown in countries where Islam originated, and that therefore the followers of Islam need in no way fear that they are compromising themselves with the principles of their faith, if they are required to give up cow-slaughter for establishing peaceful relations with other communities. He also gives pen-pictures, from the writings of eminent men, of the horrible and heart-rending scenes that are daily enacted in slaughter houses. He further argues that medically the use of meat in general is unhealthy, and that economically the slaughter of cattle is a great source of danger to the agricultural interests of India. A short history of cow-protection in India is also included to show that in olden days many kings, including Muslim sovereigns, passed measures for the protection of cattle life in India.

In our opinion, however, the author's exposition of the Hindu view on the sanctity of the cow is not likely to receive the approval of many modern Hindus. The statement that Hinduism considers the cow as next to god alone in holiness is highly misleading. None of the original and universally accepted scriptures of Hinduism like the Upanishads and the Gita have anything to say about the divinity of the cow. It is the Puranas and the Smritis that advocate beliefs of this type. Nobody gainsays the usefulness of cow and the fact that adequate steps should be taken for its protection. But we fail to see in the cow any manifestation of divinity greater than in other animals, except for the assertion of some Puranic scriptures, the ulterior object of which is to protect such a useful animal for human welfare. However this constant harping on the non-essentials of religion is in most cases the prolific source of communal discord and antagonism. Some other argument in the book are also open to objections ; but in a short review like this we are not in a position to deal with all of them. The author's idea of minimising the pain inflicted on animals in the slaughter houses by improvements in the means of slaughter is, however, quite commendable, and we think many such practical schemes are now under trial in different parts of the world.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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[No. 8

PRAYER

ॐ

असारे संसारे निजभजनदूरे जडधिया
भ्रमन्ते मामन्धं परमकृपया पातुमुचितं ।
मदन्यः को दीनस्तव कृपणरक्षातिनिपुण—
स्त्वदन्यः को वा मे त्रिजगति शरण्यः पशुपते ॥
प्रभुस्त्वं दीनानां खलु परमबन्धुः पशुपते
प्रमुख्योहं तेषामपि किमुत बन्धुत्वमनयोः ।
त्वयैव चन्तव्यः शिव मदपराधाश्च सकलाः
प्रयत्नात्कर्तव्यं मदवनमियं बन्धुसरणिः ॥

O Lord, it is but fitting that Thou shouldst in Thy infinite mercy save me of dull intellect and imperfect insight whirling in the cycle of Samsara (cycle of births and deaths)—a state in itself worthless and uncongenial for the practice of devotion towards Thee. Breathes there a creature more miserable than myself, and is there a person more skilled to save the wretched than Thyself? Who else but Thee shall therefore be my saviour in the three worlds?

O Lord, Thou art all-powerful and also the dearest friend of the miserable among whom I am the chief. What else is required to establish relationship between us? O Siva, Thou shouldst certainly, therefore, forgive me my sins and bring about my salvation by Thy own earnest effort. Such, however, is the way of relations.

SIVANANDALAHARI

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

III

[Vijay Krishna Goswami and his practice of spiritual discipline in solitude]

Srijut Vijay has just returned from Gaya. There he lived for a long time in solitude and associated with holy men. He puts on the ochre cloth now-a-days. He is in a very exalted mood, and looks as if he is in meditation always. He is sitting before Sri Ramakrishna with his head bent down like one deeply immersed in thought.

While looking at Vijay Sri Ramakrishna asks, "Well, Vijay, have you given up your abode ?

" Just listen. Two Sadhus (holy men) happened to arrive in a certain city during the course of their wanderings. One of them was going round the town seeing its market places, shops and buildings. Just then he came across the other. The second Sadhu inquired, "I see you are engaged in seeing the sights of the town, being free from cares. But where have you left your things ? To this, the former replied, 'First of all I secured a place of residence, and there keeping my luggages under lock and key, I have come out for sight-seeing, free from all anxiety.' So I ask you Vijay, ' Have you fixed up your abode ?'"

Sri Ramakrishna (To M. and others): You see the spring of Vijay's spiritual life was blocked so long, but now it is flowing.

[Vijay and Shivanath. Selfless work. The renunciation of the monk]

Sri Ramakrishna (to Vijay) : You see, Shivanath has got many worries. He has to write for the newspaper, and has also to attend to so many other things. Worldly activities take away the peace of mind ; they bring in their train cares and anxieties.

"It is told in the Srimad Bhagavatam that the Avadhuta (a great Yogi) had twenty-four Gurus (preceptors), and of these the kite was one. At a certain place some fishermen were catching fish. A kite swooped down and snatched away a fish. Seeing this, a host of crows chased the kite, and they went on cawing after it teasing it very much. And they followed it wherever it went with the fish in its beak. The kite flew towards the south, and the crows also followed it there. It turned to the north and the crows also pursued it as before. It flew towards the east and then towards the west, and crows too, chased it still. The kite got tired and in the course of its flight the fish dropped down from its beak. The crows this time left the kite and flew after

the fish. The kite then sat quietly on the branch of a tree, and began to think, 'It is the fish that created all this trouble for me. Now that it has dropped down, I am free from all worries?'

"The lesson that the Avadhuta learnt from the kite was this : so long as a person has got the fish of desire in him, he has to engage himself in activity, and has to pass through its consequent worries and anxieties. When the desire is given up, there is no more work for him to do, and then there is peace.

"Work with attachment is bad ; while work without attachment is good, for it does not bring cares along with it. But it is very difficult to work unattached. A person may think that he is working without any selfish desire, but it may get into the mind somehow, without his knowledge. Some of those who have already passed through much spiritual practice can, by virtue of it, work without attachment. Work may easily be done unattached after God-realisation. But very often work falls off from the realised man. Only very few (like the sage Narada and others) perform action for the good of the world."

[Hoarding wealth not permissible for the monk. Cessation of work after the attainment of Divine Love]

"The Avadhuta had another Guru in the bee. The bee gathers honey with great diligence for days together. But it cannot enjoy the honey for which it labours. Some one else comes, breaks the hive and takes the honey away. From the bee the Avadhuta learnt that he should not store anything for the future. The monks should depend on the Lord whole-heartedly, and should not worry about hoarding wealth.

"But this rule is not meant for the householders. They have got to maintain their families, and as such they should save something for future necessity. There is an adage that says, 'The bird and the monk do not lay by anything. But even birds, when they get young ones, bring food in their beaks for feeding them.'

"You see, Vijay! Never believe those Sadhus (holy men) who have got a number of luggages, packets and bundles with them. I once saw some Sadhus of this type under the banyan tree. Two or three of them were sitting down quietly, some were cleaning the pulse they were going to cook, while a few others were stitching their cloths,—and all were enjoying a chat over the feasts given by some rich people. They were talking, 'Well, that rich man spent lakhs of rupees, and gave a grand feast to the Sadhus. Oh! what a lot of delicacies he got for them?' " (All laugh)

Vijay: Yes, sir. At Gaya I came across many Sadhus of this type,—Sadhus who had brass drinking vessels with them. (All laugh)

Sri Ramakrishna (to Vijay): Work drops off by itself when one comes to possess a true love for God. Let those continue to work, who are being made to do so by the Lord. But as for yourself it is time when you should give up everything, and say, 'Oh my soul! Let thee and me alone look on the Divine Mother and let Her be seen by none else.'

Saying this the Master sings in his incomparably charming voice shedding sweetness all round:—

"Oh my soul! Hold with care in thine heart, my beloved Mother.

Let thee and me alone look on Her, let her be seen by none else.

Eluding the passions, come, O my soul, let us look on Her in solitude; let us, however, keep with us only the organ of speech (the tongue), so that it may call unto the Mother. (Now and then let it call unto the Mother).

Don't allow the evil desires—thy evil advisers—to come near thee.

Let the eye of wisdom be on its guard, let it be vigilant. (Let it be very vigilant)."

Sri Ramakrishna (to Vijay): Take refuge in the Lord, and give up shyness, fear, etc. Do away with such thoughts as these,—what will people say of me, if I dance in the name of the Lord?

[Shyness, hatred and fear]

"There is an adage,—shyness, hatred and fear—so long as a person has these, he cannot achieve the highest. Shyness, hatred, fear, pride of caste, desire to hide one's feeling and actions—all these are bonds. When freed from these, the Jiva attains liberation. 'Caught in bonds is Jiva; freed from bonds is Shiva.'

[Divine Love]

"*Prema* (the highest Divine Love) is a rare thing. The first step is *Bhakti* (devotion for God). A person comes to have it when he feels towards Him the devotion that a wife has for her husband. Pure *Bhakti* is very hard to attain. Through it the heart and the mind become merged in God.

"Then comes *Bhava* (spiritual ecstasy). In it a person becomes speechless. His breath stops,—he gets *Kumbhaka* (suspension of breath) without any effort. He is like the man who gets his speech and breath suspended when about to fire at a target.

"To have *Prema* (the highest Divine Love) is a far off thing. *Chaitanyadeva* had it. When one gets it, all outside objects are

forgotten. The whole world is forgotten. Even such a dear thing as one's own body is forgotten.

Saying this Sri Ramakrishna sings again :—

“ When will that (blessed) day arrive for me,

When on taking the name of God tears will flow from my eyes
in torrents,

When worldly thoughts will vanish away,

When the hairs (on my body) will stand on their ends (in joy)?”

IN DEFENCE OF HINDUISM—II

Very few systems of thought extant in the world can claim absolute perfection ; but when the essentials of a religion are taken into consideration, Hinduism furnishes the most logical and comprehensive system of thought ever evolved by human intellect, and meets in a synthetic way the apparent contradictions that seem to puzzle ordinary minds. As already pointed out, universalism is the very key-note of its philosophy, and the doctrine of cosmic unity as realised by the seers lends an eternal sanction to its principle of toleration. But this spirit of toleration that so distinctly marks off Hinduism from other religious faiths has been characterised by some Christian thinkers as a sign of impotence and as a mean trick to safeguard its own untenable position ! In the opinion of this class of thinkers, aggressiveness to the extent of persecution is the unmistakable proof of a virile and living religion and christianity that has behind it an unbroken record of bloody persecution and intolerance is the only ‘source of the new explosive thought which is recreating Indian character and intellect to-day.’ For, they hold that ‘only in the riches of christianity can Hindus find universal principles needed for a new intellectual, moral and social life’ and ‘there is no other religion that contains these master ideas.’ But for good or for evil the thoughts of men have never flowed in the same groove, and the nobler and wiser sections of humanity in every age and clime have condemned the rank *persecution and violence* that characterise the history of the spread of christianity. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the sloppy sentimentalism of these Christian bigots who themselves being idolators of the worst type and champions of violence even in the matters of religion have gone the length of denouncing Hindu religion whose central theme is *universal toleration and non-violence* and which has not up till now been tarnished by a single act of violence or bigotry. The religion that with its profession of toleration cannot stand the onslaught and

aggressive violence of other proselytising faiths must be admitted to be one lacking in virility and spiritual force and is likely to be absorbed in other systems in process of time, for toleration in that case is not an outcome of strength, but a blind to hide its moral weakness and want of dynamism. But the Hindu conception of toleration has never been grounded on such a queer notion. From time immemorial Hinduism has stood as a religion of highest realisation and accommodated in its catholic fold many other systems of thought without losing in the least its distinctive character as a dynamic force in the world. It has, moreover, come to the rescue of humanity gravelling in the sink of materialism, many times in the past and has again stood before the world with its message of universal toleration and brotherhood. "At one of the most vital crises of our age", says Mr. Howsin, "India opened to us a way of escape. At a time when the intellect, freeing itself from the bondage of an anthropomorphic religion, refused to believe any longer in the crude dogmas of orthodox christianity, and was about to cast itself into the arms of an equally crude and ignorant materialism, the deep spiritual wisdom of India came to our aid. Liberated by the efforts of men like Prof. Max Muller and Deussen, the subtle invigorating breath of Hindu Idealism swept across our national thought and found echoes in many hearts and minds unconscious of its origin." This is how Hinduism has been understood by great and sincere minds of the western world and how its subtle forces have silently been ushering in a complete turnover in their mental outlook. Moreover, the western science has justified its sacred role as an investigator of truth by reaffirming what Hinduism proclaimed centuries ago. But so far as christianity is concerned, there has been a persistent attempt in the circle of its zealous adherents to strangle the voice of science, and the greatest thinkers of Europe such as Voltaire, Darwin, Buchner, Flammarion, Victor Hugo, are even now the victims of vituperative tongues of the orthodox Christian community. So Swami Vivekananda has pertinently remarked: "With the single exception of charitable organisation, no other line of work in Europe is in harmony with the teachings of the Gospel. Whatever heights of progress Europe has attained, every one of them has been gained by its revolt against christianity—by its rising against the Gospel. If christianity had its old paramount sway in Europe to-day, it would have lighted the fire of Inquisition against such modern scientists as Pasteur and Koch, and burnt Darwin and others of his school at the stake. *In modern Europe christianity and civilisation are two different things.* Civilisation has now girded up her loins to destroy her old enemy, christianity, to overthrow the clergy, and to wring educational and

charitable institutions from their hands. But for the ignorance-ridden rustic masses, christianity would never have been able for a moment to support its present despised existence, and would have been pulled out by its roots; for the urban people are, even now enemies of the Christian Church." No truer picture of the Christian spirit of toleration and of the relation in which christianity stands to science and civilisation to-day has been portrayed in such pithy and pregnant sentences.

It is not indeed our purpose here to put our fingers on the plague-spots of christianity. But we are constrained to point out all these to show how dogmatism warps human sentiment and intellect and destroys the natural charm that surrounds the holiest enthusiasm. This fact has been rightly emphasised by Dr. Paul Carus in his *Religion of Science*. He says that the dogmatic religions of today are still under the spell of paganism and even christianity is not yet free from idolatry—a fact which appears in many various customs and ceremonies. Modern christianity, he further remarks, demands a blind belief in confessions of faith and other man-made formulas, while they trample under foot any one who dares to search for the truth or walk in the way of progress. That Christianity has failed to keep pace with the progress of the times and satisfy the aspirations of the human soul has also become patent from the gradual secession of men from the church. The Rt. Hon. Sir W. Joynson Hicks, formerly Secretary of State for Home affairs remarked: "There is a most alarming decline in the number of candidates for ordination, so much so that the Editor of 'Crockford' (Clerical Directory) tells us that in a few years it will be impossible for the church to carry on unless this decline is arrested. There is a steady decline in the number of the candidates for confirmation and of Sunday school scholars, and everywhere there is the cry that people are ceasing to attend church." This candid but startling statement of fact from a person of the eminence of Joynson Hicks will no doubt serve as an unfailing barometer to indicate the changes that have already come over in the spiritual atmosphere of the Christian world. It cannot now be gainsaid that *modern christianity*, cloistered as it is within the dead walls of dogmatism and superstition, can no longer stand the glare of science and free-thinking. It has already proved its futility as a power to direct human activity to its noblest end. The races of the West are therefore eager to discover a new 'explosive' thought, a new philosophy which shall satisfy their spiritual hankering; for christianity, although good and glorious in many respects, has been imperfectly understood and as such found to be insufficient. "The rational West," says Swami Vivekananda, "is earnestly bent upon seeking out the rationality, the *raison d'être* of all

its philosophy and its ethics.....They want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the only Infinite Reality, that exists in you and in me and in all, in the self, in the soul?.....This is the dictato of Indian philosophy.....This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality.....Europe wants it today and this great principle is even now unconsciously forming the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France and in America."

A religion to be universal must be one that will have no location in place or time, must shine like the sun on saints and sinners, adherents of all faiths alike and have infinite space for development. It must be broad and catholic enough to embrace the whole humanity in its arms and afford shelter to every human being from the grovelling savage to the super-man standing head and shoulders above the rest of humanity. "It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognise divinity in every man and woman and whose scope, whose whole force will be centred in aiding humanity to realise its own free, divine nature." And what religion, we may be permitted to ask, except the religion of the Vedanta—the kernel of Hinduism—has ever satisfied the multifold conditions and transcended the narrow bounds of dogmatism and bigotry to rally the entire humanity on a platform of equality and universal brotherhood? What religion on earth has ever held before men such an infinite scope for the development of the human minds, such catholicity and toleration? And what religion has demonstrated with scientific precision the solidarity of the universe and recognised the fundamental unity of all religions, the divinity and omnipotence of the human soul? The Hindu religion is built upon eternal principles of which the Vedas are the noblest embodiment and the sages and prophets are only discoverers. The fabric of other faiths in the world has been raised on the historicity of some founder's life and one blow to the historicity of such a life is sufficient to bring the entire structure to the ground. But Hindu religion being based upon the fundamental verities of life is a most intensely impersonal one and has yet in it 'an infinite scope for the play of persons'—for the advent of incarnations, sages and prophets to enlighten humanity with the truths of our Sanatan Dharma. Personality in religion does not count in the task of unifying the interests of mankind. It is only on the broad platform of principles that the human beings with divergent proclivities and aspirations can be made to stand together. And it is the glory of Hinduism that it has from age to age served to link

together different minds with the golden thread of its universal principles. To crown all, the findings of the modern scientific investigation are in entire harmony with the teachings of the Vedanta which anticipated even the conclusions of the most profound modern thinkers such as Berkeley, Hume, Hartman, Schopenhauer and the like. These are in fact some of the most insistent claims of the Vedanta to be the universal religion of mankind.

From age to age Hinduism has proclaimed to mankind that the soul of man is the seat of infinite power and energy and it is the realisation of one's identity with this supreme soul, that unlocks the eternal spring of divine glory, and transforms the enlightened one into an all-knowing, omnipotent being dominating the thought-world and destiny of mankind. He lives in eternity and is no more tossed to and fro by the waves of cause and effect in the ocean of matter. The world to him is like a bubble playing on the surface of the sea and he calls out to humanity from the transcendent height of his spiritual glory: "Hear, Ye children of Immortal Bliss! Even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death once for all." This is the grandest assurance that Hinduism has carried to mankind in all ages—an assurance that repudiates the *original* sin of man but establishes the eternal freedom of the soul and holds before the world the message of universal peace and brotherhood. The veil of false individuality which the western people cling to with a dogged pertinacity in all the phases of their life must be torn off to stand face to face with the radiance of the soul which is the Ancient One, beginningless and endless in its unchanging reality. The future of the world-civilisation depends upon the apprehension of the divinity of man and the oneness of all, for that is the only democratic principle on which the temple of human brotherhood can be raised and that is the one unifying bond with which the disintegrating forces can be welded into harmony; in short, that is the only fountain-head of the grand idea of toleration so much needed in the present age when people in the name of religion are cutting the throats of their brethren and blaspheming one another's faiths. For 'no civilisation can grow, unless fanaticism, bloodshed and brutality stop. No civilisation can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon one another.' It is for these noble principles that Hinduism has stood countless changes in the social and political life of India and proved to be the palladium of strength in the cultural life of the people. "Its distinguishing feature is the practical recognition of the universal brotherhood of men, without distinction of colour, race, sex or creed; this recognition of the fundamental unity being based not on sentiment but on the realisation of the presence of the Divine Lord in all

his creatures. Narayana is the Christ dwelling individually in the hearts of all ; collectively mankind is the great organism through which, as Logos, He is continually realising himself and manifesting through the process of evolution, His divine purpose throughout the ages,"—says a great European thinker. But it would not be an exaggeration to state that the western civilisation has failed to offer any such solution to the great problems of inherent permanent national solidarity, serenity of spirit, and man's greatest achievement,—the conquest of himself.

The modern age may rightly be called the age of reason and enquiry. Nothing that fails to stand the searching light of rational and free thinking can be accepted as gospel truth and carry conviction to the human mind. The science has ushered in an era of intellectual revolution and all forms of belief are now being melted in the crucible of scientific reason. The one good that science has done to human society is that it has almost completed the destruction of the strongholds of superstitions and theological dogmas. For a religion to be true and enduring must stand on the bed-rock of eternal principles and furnish a rational system of thought and not a bundle of filthy usages and social customs. There are now a days a class of western writers who after a superficial perusal of the Hindu scriptures rush to make a hasty generalisation and condemn Hindu religion right and left, and willingly or unwillingly misinterpret the spirit and outlook of Hinduism before the world at large. A recent anonymous letter published in the *Spectator* (20-7-29) under the caption of 'Hinduism and Child marriage' is but another instance in point. The *learned* writer has emphatically stated that 'Hinduism is not a religion in the sense that christianity or Mohammedanism is a religion' and that 'it is merely a social system' and 'a very poor one as that.' Thus the anonymous writer has understood Hinduism as nothing short of a poor social system and associated it with all manner of filthy social customs and usages, though the Hindus and other master minds of the East and the West have never had the obtuseness to view and understand Hinduism in that light and drag it down to the external accretions of their social life. For, had it been so, the Hindus as a race would have been long extinct or sunk into the depth of rank barbarism needing the spiritual ministrations of the evangelist of the Christian fold who are so anxious to save the lost souls of the East ! But fortunately it is not so. Every society not excepting the Christian one has its own peculiar customs and usages, some of which are beneficial and some too old and outworn to serve any useful purpose in society. But to identify a religion with the multiplicity of such forms and practices, most of which are local in their origin and undergoing

changes with the advance of time is arrant non-sense and an insult to the intelligence of man. It has been clearly shown in the foregoing pages that Hinduism is not 'a bundle of social customs' and that, it is not a whit inferior to any other religion on the face of the globe. While christianity with its dogmas and beliefs has been shaken to its foundation by the sledge-hammer blows of modern science, Hinduism which has been stigmatised as a 'bundle of a few social customs,' has come out in all its glory and beauty not to stifle the voice of science but to lend countenance to its rational utterances,—its profound and significant revelations, and has therefore compelled the homage of the greatest intellects and free-thinkers of the world.

Needless to say, the culture of the East must come to the rescue of the modern age as it had done so many times in the past. The tide has already set in, deep and irresistible; but those who would attempt to gather their understanding of the East from the languages of the West would invariably fail to divine its right course. A spiritual comradeship is what is the desideratum of the present age and it can only be consummated not by hatred or jealousy, vituperation or fanatical outburst but by transcending the pettiness of mind and realising the fundamental truths of all religions and their essential unity, with a broader vision and a wider outlook on life. When such an attitude of mind is attained, it is only then that the spirit of one another's religion can be rightly appreciated. Hinduism has since antiquity held before humanity this catholic idealism that recognises all faiths to be the various expressions of the one Eternal Religion, provided ample scope for the infinite possibilities of human development through multiple ways, linked all apparently divergent faiths and creeds into one grand harmony with the note of toleration as its central symphony, and has demonstrated the fundamental unity of the universe of beings. And it is for this reason that Indian culture with its manifold facets has stood its own ground and laid its indefeasible claim to be the only governing force in the coming readjustment of human affairs and the evolution of a world-civilisation.

THE ASHRAMAS

By Sir John Woodroffe

According to the ordinary ancient usage individuals passed through all the Ashramas or stages of life in their order, *viz.*, student, householder, forest recluse and mendicant ascetic. By the disciplines of the earlier Ashramas the senses were pacified and man was prepared

for entry into the later. If one can rise one can also fall: and a premature rise is likely to lead to a fall. One should therefore rise gradually as an ant climbs from the ground up the trunk of a tree, to its branches at the top whereof it gets at the fruit. But in some cases this passing from one Ashrama to another did not take place. Thus in the case of the first or student (Brahmacharya Ashrama) there were four chief divisions of Brahmacharin, namely, Gâyatri, Prājāpatya, Brāhmana, Brihantiti. The first is he who after the thread ceremony (Upanayana), studies the Gâyatri and lives ascetically for three days: (A Brāhmana may receive the thread at 5 years, more generally at 8; the Kshatriya and Vaishya up to 16; after that the ceremony is not done and those who have not been through it at 16 are called Brātya which means one who has not had sacrament (Sangskārahina). The second is he who living a celibate student life learns the Veda with his teacher (Guru): He is called Guru who having done the rites gives Veda to the student. He is called Achārya who having done his sacred thread ceremony teaches Veda with Vedāṅga (Sa guru yah kriyāh kritvā vedamasmai prayachohhati upantya dadad-vedam āchāryah sa udāhritah—Yatidharmanirnaya p. 49.) for 24 years (now in practice reduced to 12 days), becomes a householder and lives with one wife only, cohabiting with her only after the expiration of four days after cessation of the menstrual period (ritukāla or period of fertility) and avoiding all other women. The third is he who lives continently and studies Veda in the house of the Guru for 42 years; and the last or fourth is he who remains in his Guru's house until his own death (Naishtikah brahmachārī). Should the Guru die before his disciple then the latter continues to live in the house of the Guru's son, or in default in the house of his widow, or in her default where the sacred fire of the Guru was kept at the time of his death (Yatidharmanirnaya 29 *et seq.*). Though not technically called a renouncer (Sannyāsin) and though he is not allowed to enter the Sannyāsāshrama such a Brahmachārī who renounces the household life to a large extent belongs to the same class. The student is required to look upon his mother, father, teacher, and the guests (atithi) as Deities, and the greatest of all these is the mother (Mātridevobhava, Pitridevobhava, Achāryadevobhava, Atithidevobhava). When living with his teacher he must be obedient to and please him and show him as indeed all his elders reverence. The term Guru is applied to these as well as the teachers. Thus the mother is the first of Gurus. When saluting them he draws their attention saying "Asau aham". He must stand when the Guru stands, and not turn his back to him when the latter is talking or eating. He should follow him and welcom : him. If he hears any one speak evil of his Guru he should

close his ears or go elsewhere. He must dress simply in a skin of black antelope with a girdle of fibre, wear his sacred thread and carry a staff. His head should either be shaved or his hair should be left uncombed. His life must be simple and free from every kind of luxury. He thus must not use shoes, umbrella, perfumery, collyrium, ride on a horse or elephant and must lie on the floor. He must beg alms from Brāhmanas of good repute (anindya) and do household work in the Guru's family (Gurukula) such as fetch water, tend the cows, get fire for cooking and the homa sacrifice and so forth. The Brahmachāri should avoid all frivolity in the way of singing, dancing, playing on instruments (Vādanam), gambling (dyutam), looking at women (strīnām prekṣhanā), conversation about women, and improper (aśhīla) talk. His diet must be simple with no wine nor flesh for no living being should be killed for his food (prāṇi-himsā). He should rise early in the morning before his Guru, bathe twice a day and clean his teeth. In bathing he should stand upright like a staff and dip in the water. The Sandhyā prayer should be said before sunrise and in the evening and the fire sacrifice should be done at the same times. As he meets others he should salute them kindly and respectfully. He should study Veda and then the Vedāṅgas. When these have been learnt he may, if his mind and character qualify him therefor, proceed to a study of the Vedānta philosophy. If he studies other subjects he takes on the character of a Shūdra (Shūdrattva). That student is to be taught who is capable of knowing the Atmā (ātmavit). For it is Veda which alone procures the supreme goal (nishreyasakara) that is liberation (mukti). He must follow Dharma in all things avoid all evil such as anger, greed or lust and be truthful. In particular he must preserve a strict chastity. If he violates this through passion (kāma) then he loses his Brahmacharya and must do expiation, (Na retah skandhayēt). Should this befall him involuntarily (akāmatah) as in sleep (svapnesiktva) he must bathe and do worship of Sūrya thrice. He must avoid every occasion of temptation, for as Manu says, "The power of the senses is so strong that they draw even the wise",—(Balavān indriya-grāmo vidvangsam api karshati) Thus he must not sit in lonely places with women even if they be related to him, nor touch the feet of the wife of his Guru if she be youthful. And in such matters fall is natural to both men and women,—(Svabhāva esha nārīnām narānām iha dūshanam). At the same time welfare and prosperity suitable to him and her should not be shunned.—(Bhūtyai na pramāditavyam kushalāt na pramāditavyam—Yatidharmanirṇaya 31). If he does not wish to be permanently Brahmachāri (Naiṣthikah brahmachari) he should marry a wife who is not a mere child or young girl and thus enter the

house-hold stage,—(Yavtyast as the Yatidharmanirnaya p.51 says citing Yājñavalkya). A woman is youthful (yuvati) at 16 years old. But the "yas" pratyaya (affix) is used in Sanskrit in the superlative sense that is well over 16, not under it.

In the Devībhāgavata there is a very interesting discussion between the sage Vyāsa and his son Shuka on the subject of marriage,—(Skandha 14 Ch.). Vyāsa wanted his son to marry so that he might carry on the family. Shuka is struck with horror at the idea. "What happens (he says) in this mortal world? Shall I give up the happiness which arises from the knowledge of the self (ātma jñāna sukha) for the body unclean with its urine and faeces! A man in a cage may find release but not men entangled with wife and children." Vyāsa replies: "The household state (gārhasthya āshrama) is not a prison house (bandhanāgāra) nor the cause of bondage. If a man is mentally released then he is released even though he be a householder. The great sages Vashishtha and others were householders. Man should go through all the Ashramas in their order adopting the wholly ascetic life after dwelling in the forest. The senses are so intoxicating that a man who has no wife may fall. So the sage Vishvāmītra who did not marry was yet fascinated by the celestial Menakā who bore him Shakuntalā. Parāshara my father fell in love with a fisher girl. Even Brahmā could not control his passion for he sought his daughter Sandhyā"—(See notes to v. 22 of Avalon's "Greatness of Shiva"—Mahimnastava—where this incident is explained). The point taken may be illustrated by another. The renowned and erudite Raghunandana Bhattachārya author of the work on Smṛiti Shāstra called Ashtavīṅśatitattva when one day perusing the line "Balavān indriyagrāmo vidvāṅsam api karshati" (Strength of the senses subdues even the wise) doubted the accuracy of the text and inserted the word "not" (nāpi, i. e., does not subdue). Later however having taken shelter from the rain in a hut he discerned to his surprise that a beautiful fisher woman attracted him. The original text was then restored as being conformable to his own experience.

Shuka however answered: "The household life produces pain. A married man must strive for wealth for he must support his family. Those who are without money are persecuted by their own relations. Those who have it do not sleep happily at night. Asking of favours is worse than death. It is miserable to have to flatter the wealthy or to secure money of them. All dependence on others is painful. Can a man who is always seeking money by earning or gift be happy? The ascetic has only one belly to fill and that only in part with roots and fruits. But a wife is like a leech (Jalūka) who drinks one's blood without giving one pain, deluding by her sweet words preventing nightly sleep from desire for enjoyment. I seek the enjoyment of the

spirit only." Shuka was an exceptional boy who was not of this world. His father advocated the life which is the run of most men: a life of gradual progress in the world and then from the world. He illustrated the dangers of attempting to be too superior to the claims of the flesh. On the other hand he pointed out that in the truly great their greatness is a thing of mind independent of external conditions and making them subserve the true purposes of the self. Shuka had so outpassed all passion that, as the *Shrimadbhāgavata* says, women appeared unclothed before him though not before his father. But of those who had not reached this stage he might say that if it was possible to attain liberation as a householder his position and duties increased the difficulties which obstruct those who are upon this path.

The *Ashrama Upanishad* of the *Atharvaveda* says that there are four kinds of householders (*grihastha*) namely *Vārttikavrittayah*, *Shālinavrittayah*, *Yāyavārāh*, *Ghorasannyāsikah*,—(See *Yatidharma-nirnaya* p. 115 *et seq.*). During their lives of a supposed duration of 100 years the first are the class who gain their livelihood by agriculture, the keeping of cows and trade which is of an irreproachable (*agarhita*) character: not for instance a wine merchant. Livelihood must be in conformity with justice and honesty (*nyāyavritti*). The second class are persons of independent means who do sacrifice at their own houses and not for others at their houses; who give but do not take alms; who read but who do not teach. The third class do both of these several sets of acts. The fourth class of householder partakes of the character of an ascetic (*Sannyāsin*) though he follows the family life. He willingly lives from hand to mouth, acquiring by gleanings and so forth what is necessary for the day's provision for himself and family and storing up nothing against the morrow.

Though in this *Ashrama* there is enjoyment it should be restrained by *Dharma* and true wisdom. Man should repay the three debts (*rina*) due to the "gods" (*Devas*) who give him blessings; to his forefathers (*Pitri*) who have given him birth in human form; and to men (*Manushya*) who are his fellows, who have helped and will help him, and need his help in return. He must then shelter and entertain the guests and help the needy. A householder is not merely to think of himself and how he may procure pleasure. Indeed it is this *Ashrama* which gives shelter to all just as the King is called *Sarvāshrami* because he protects all *Ashramas*. The householder should strive to be of good (*sumati*) and peaceful mind (*shānta*), self-controlled and master of himself (*Atmavān*). He should not overdelight in pleasant things nor overlament for what is unpleasant,—(*Na cha hrishyet na cha tapet*). He must cultivate contentment with what he has got (*santōsha*) and not fret for other things (*nirāshi*) or give way to anxiety (*chintā*). His life should be sinless, pure and his word true. His

bliss should lie in becoming master in the knowing of himself,— (Atmalābhena santushtah). He should perform the ritual (Karma) enjoined in the śāstra and worship the three fires, namely Dakshināgni, Gārhapatya, Ahavantiya. He also reads the Veda and studies Vedānta if so inclined and is competent therefor. Indeed it is possible though it is rare that a Grihastha may attain to the highest. Thus the sage Janaka was not only of this Ashrama, but a king and such was his greatness that though he enjoyed he did so without attachment and without affecting the equanimity of a mind which in whatever it did was not moved by worldly things but was set on its highest end,— “Sa yat atra kinchit pashyati bhavati ananvagatastena” (whatever he was in this world he is not attached to that or affected by it). Shuka when he went to Janaka was alarmed because he found him with two beautiful youthful women but soon learnt that this did not mean in Janaka's case what it might ordinarily have spelt in the case of others. Thus he was liberated whilst living (jīvanmukta). In this state though as a body liable to enjoyment and suffering he was yet such that on the dissolution of the body he attained full freedom (videha kaivalya).

Having given birth to son and grandson the householder should on the cessation of desires (vairāgya) and becoming a renouncer (virakta) retire to the forest (vānaprastha āshrama) and giving up the three fires become an ascetic (Sannyāsin) or one who has surrendered all worldly things. Having as a householder repayed the three debts he should devote his mind wholly to God and liberation.

The essence however of this wonderful system is that there should be orderly development. Harm is likely to be incurred in proceeding too fast and in the adoption of an ascetic life for which a man is unsuited by his development. At whatever stage dispassion (vairāgya) arises there is fitness for Sannyāsa. Ordinarily however it only arises after the first two stages have been passed. Mere renouncing (sannyāsa) will not achieve any fruitful result (siddhi). The mind and heart (Chitta) must be first purified. This purification (Chitta shuddhi) is effected in the first two Ashramas wherein the passions are guided, rightly satisfied and thus pacified and where the mind is gradually trained both to enjoy and to look for that which is beyond worldly pleasure. This purification is effected by action (Karma) ritual and otherwise. It is true that by Karma, that which is akrita or “not done” cannot be had. Trayīdharma or Vaidik dharma cannot procure liberation if, as is ordinarily the case, it is done with desire. For desire breeds desire and rebirth. But so long as man is man he cannot avoid Karma. Further he cannot ordinarily get to the top of the ladder without treading each of the lower steps. There have been extraordinary cases of desirelessness (Vairāgya), purity and wisdom shown in childhood. But these are exceptions. For the vast

majority it is necessary to proceed step by step and as the preceding step is necessarily a preliminary to the next—so the ordinary Vaidik dharma done with desire (Sakāma) is a necessary preliminary which must be gone through, and out of which man should eventually emerge. For mere adherence to ritualism with desire for earthly and heavenly happiness leads to re-birth with all its suffering.

Doing good for the sake of reward is a state inferior to that in which it is done for the sake of goodness only. But men must ordinarily be first moved by reward before they can act without expectation of it. Karmayoga must precede ascetic renouncement of all Karma. Even the ritual of those who act with desire may be made the cause of true purification if it is done selflessly (nishkāma) offering the fruit thereof to the Lord (Ishvarārpana buddhyā). That is action with desire (Sakāma karma) purifies in its degree but not truly so far it perpetuates desire. True purification is that which secures desirelessness (vairāgya). Chittashuddhyantaram jñānasāadhanārtham sannyāsa-grahanaṁ kartavyam (see Yatidharmanirnaya 1 ch. on the subject here dealt with). He is entitled to seek realisation through Upanishad the impurity (mālinya) of whose mind and heart has been cleansed, who has given up all worldly and heavenly desires; has offered the fruit of all his action to Ishvara and is thus free from all sadness (Shoka). For those who really believe in and whose minds are truly set on God and who have abandoned all else are not sad. For what can make them so? After this purification of mind (Chitta shuddhi) renunciation (Sannyāsa) should be done for the attainment of knowledge. Karma done with the object of getting knowledge (vidyā) does not affect the doer (karimalepona bhavati) because of the strength of vidyā. A man may do three homas a day and yet not be attached (lipta). Knowledge (jñāna) is in fact the mark of Sannyāsa,—Jñānam sannyāsa lakshanam. As the Gītā says, "Having given up all kinds of Dharma take shelter with Me;" that is Jñāna. Sannyāsa of all karmas is called Jñānānga that is done for the sake of knowledge. Jñāna is the only means (Sādhana) of liberation (moksha) and this is the essence of all Upanishads. Sādhana which is productive of liberation consists in reading and reciting the words of Veda, the Vedantic Sūtras and commentaries and other cognate Shāstras, continence (brahmacharya), fasting (upavāsa), faith in Guru and Veda (shraddhā), austerity (Tapas), self-control (Dama) and independence of all external things. Renunciation (tyāga) is the part of him who would become Brahman. External things cannot touch such an one. In the midst of objects of desire he is desireless as was Janaka to whom Shukadeva the son of Vyāsa went for study and whom he found surrounded by women. "This man,"

as Shuka says, "is not affected by sin nor does sin affect him." Na lipyate karmanā pāpakena evam vedhi pāpang karma na shlishyate. It is not the gross bodily act which is sinful for the body does not sin but the intention with which it is done. Sin is a corrupt affectation of the mental body or "soul". A Yati or self-controller (Yati comes from Yam=to control and it) is he who is free of sin or fault. By Tapas and so forth (austerity and devotion), sin is destroyed. By knowledge (Jñāna) liberation (Moksha) is obtained. The negative action of the first leads to the positive acquirement of the second and in this sense both (the first indirectly and the second directly) are the cause of Moksha. A jñāni (ib. p. 12) is he who is devoid of anger and the other passions, darkness, dharma and adharma and the sense of separateness (bhedadrishti). He looks upon all things with an equal eye as being himself. Samadarshanā ye ātmavat pashyanti. For the perfect jñāni there is nothing to be seen (vedya) for as Shruti says,—yatra anyadiva syāt tatra anyah anyāt pashyot (where there seems to be others then one sees another) yatra tu asya sarvam atmaiva bhut tat kena kam pashyot (but where to him all is Atmā in that case who will be seen and by whom). For he suffers death after death who sees many. He is not attached to Karma. Linga Purāna says that in a jñāni all kinds of karma are destroyed. For only those who are under the influence of unknowing (avidyā) are qualified (adhikārī) for karma. He like the true yati is free of all desires for children (putraishana), wealth (vittaishana) and worldly ambitions (lokaishana). Having awakened (vyutthāya) (for knowledge of the "impermanence" of all these is a spiritual awakening) he abandons all for the life of a beggar (Bhikshu) and is attached to and pleased with Atmā and content with the realization of Atmā. The Yogi is he who is pleased with the Nectar of Knowledge and for whom having accomplished what is to be done (Kritākṛitya) nothing remains to be done. (Yatidharmanirnaya, p. 12.) The Yogi who has accomplished his purpose (siddha) is one with Atmā and liberated from the world of desire, action and its fruit of suffering.

(To be continued)

THE VANITY OF THE GODS

(A PARABLE FROM THE KENOPANISHAD)

By Kshitish Chandra Roy Choudhury, M. A.

The Brahman vanquished the demons for the gods. So the gods became flushed with pride. They thought, "It is *our* deed ; it is *our* achievement." So he appeared before them in a strange guise, and the gods wondered who the strange one might be. They said to Agni, the Fire-god, "Oh Agni, please go and find out who the strange person is." Agni approached the strange one who asked him, "Who are thou?" "I am Agni ;" replied the Fire-god. "They also call me Jataveda or the knower of all things." "What is the magnitude of thy power?" asked the stranger. "I can burn the whole universe," replied Agni. "Then, take this piece of straw and reduce it to ashes," said the stranger. The Fire-god tried his utmost but could not burn the little bit of straw. Thus put out, Agni returned to his confreres and admitted his failure to find out who the strange personage was. So the gods sent Vayu or the Wind-god on the errand. "Who art thou?" asked the stranger. "I am Vayu," replied the Wind-god. "They also call me Matariswan or one who roams at large through the infinite space." "What is the extent of thy power?" "I can sweep away all things on the earth by my might." "Well, then shake this little bit of straw from its position." Vayu tried to do it with all his might but could not. So he came back crest-fallen like Agni. The gods next commissioned Indra to find out who the stranger was. No sooner did Indra approach the stranger, than the latter vanished ; but there appeared in the sky the beautiful and richly-bedecked form of Uma, the daughter of the mountain-god. Indra asked her who the strange one was. It was "Brahman," she replied. "Success seems to have so turned your heads that you won't recognise Him through whose grace and might you won the victory." So the gods came to know Him and realised the folly of their pride.

Nothing can happen without His knowledge or except through His power. He is the hearer in the ear, He is the seer in the mind. He is the life in the breath, and He is the spectator in the eye. Only by realising the truth can man conquer death. Neither the senses of man, nor external objects can reveal the nature of Him. He shines and makes himself known only through His own light.

There the sun shineth not,

Nor the moon, nor any star ;

In His dazzling brilliance is lost
 Lightning's flash, and spark of fire.
 From Him all things borrow their light,
 His glory illumines the things that are bright.

DEVOTION AND THE MEANS OF ATTAINING IT

By Brahmachari Purna Chaitanya

In the field of religion and of spiritual life devotion to God has always been the main source of inspiration and solace to the vast majority of mankind. It is true that in the generality of men devotion to God, like any other longing of the heart, is the result of wordly considerations, of its supposed efficacy in remedying the dangers and difficulties of life and endowing one with long life, prosperity and other desirable things of this world. Yet in every society and in every religion we find the case of some blessed individuals, few and far between though such instances be, in whom the feeling of devotion is not the outcome of any longing for the petty things of life, but a spontaneous overflow of the warm and exhilarating feelings of the heart towards the One whom they consider as the nearest and dearest of their life, in whom they realise their ideals of purity, beauty and love.

The genesis of this noble sentiment is, however, to be sought in what appears at first sight as extremely low and mean, namely the passions that act as an ever-urging force in the human breast. Though passions in themselves are bad and undesirable, their potency and over-powering influence can in no way be denied. For we find that under their sway even the most sane and sober of men lose the balance of their mind, and forgetful of their prestige, learning, wealth, duty, and even the very idea of the body, commit deeds, more heinous than what the instinct-guided dumb creatures do. The warmth and impetuosity of emotion is there, but the manifestation is low and mean because of the ignoble nature of the suggestion that brings it into being. Perhaps it is the sight of a beautiful face, or the thought of money or of fame that awakens and calls forth the sleeping propensities of human heart, and the flow of emotion is accordingly coloured and vitiated by the vulgarity and sensuality that characterise these suggestions and the objects of desire. But a time comes in the life of some individuals, when no wordly object appears attractive enough to capture their heart. They feel that all human beauty and love and wordly pleasures are too little and too vulgar for them, and that no human being however much

talented, beautiful and virtuous is enough to command their whole-hearted love, reverence and confidence. In their search after a fitting object of love they light upon some ideal of power, purity, beauty and love described in the religions of the world as god-head or incarnations of the deity. All the sentiments of the heart gradually come to be centred round this ideal, and in course of time their whole being is absorbed, as it were, by it causing in them a strange sense of joy and elation which they could experience in no object of the world. This state of mind occurring in a few fortunate individuals goes by the name of Bhakti or God-love.

The course of this divine sentiment is not so smooth and simple as has been described above. There are various shades of difference and complex manifestations in it according to the degree of the aspirant's mental purity. The vast majority of men who entertain any sentiment of devotion to God do so because they find in Him their ideal of power and they are in need of the help and good will of such an all-powerful being for securing such desirable things of life as can not be obtained by their own effort. This attitude of mind marks the lowest stage of devotion and is superior only to the ideas of fear and propitiation entertained by animists and fetish-worshippers. There are again persons who are not actuated by any such intensely selfish motive, but are still taken up more with power and glory than with purity, beauty and love as their perception has not attained that degree of fineness required to appreciate the latter ideals. Such persons are in the early stages of the path of devotion, but in our consideration of the characteristics of divine love we have not so much in view these intermediate stages of devotion as its ripe and mature form when love has become a passion of the soul and the heart longs and pants after the object of love.

As indicated before the distinguishing characteristic of true devotion is a sense of longing for the Lord. This feeling arises only when the mind has been purged of its intense desires and the person experiences a sort of distaste for the pleasures of the world. He feels a sense of void and emptiness in life which appears to him as meaningless on account of the absence of the Lord from it. In course of time as the mind drops more and more of its dross and when the aspirant gets a slight glimpse of the Lord the sense of longing increases in volume and intensity. And when it reaches its mature state it appears as a feeling of intense anguish at the slightest forgetfulness of the Lord even for a moment. This intense feeling burns up the very seeds of brutish instincts in his heart, and having therefore lost all pleasure in worldly affairs his whole time is occupied with the thought of the Lord. When he is in the company of others he either

speaks to them or hears from them of the Lord, and when he is left to himself he meditates on the Lord or pours out his heart's love in songs concerning His divine sports or His most excellent attributes.

As the devotee reaches nearer and nearer the Lord and his love for him increases, he gets rid of the feeling of strangeness that characterises the attitude of ordinary people towards God. Man while his faculties are extremely gross sees the Lord only as a stranger possessed of unlimited powers, at best as an impartial Judge of man's doings, who is to be propitiated by right conduct and pious deeds. As a working conception of God-head for an ordinary man of the world this may be quite an adequate ideal, but a person who cultivates the feeling of loving devotion to the Lord transcends it by establishing a more close and intimate relationship with Him. He feels that the Lord is his nearest and dearest and his own in a more real sense than his worldly relations. These worldly relations are at best only acquaintances on the way who were strangers to us before we were born and whose love and connection with us will cease as soon as life separates from the body. But the Lord is the only one whose companionship is ever-lasting, whose love for us remains unperturbed through all the vicissitudes of life here and hereafter. And what is more, the most selfless forms of affection in this world are but sparks of his universal love, and He who is therefore the abode of the love that is manifested in the world, and much more, the mighty reservoir from which the small channels of earthly love originate, should be nearer and dearer to our heart than anything else. The devotee in whom love has become mature therefore feels that the Lord is the most precious and closest object of his love, more precious than his life itself. He does not entertain the slightest feelings of fear or strangeness towards his Lord.

In order to establish this feeling of intimacy and oneness devotees have adopted all forms of human relationship in their attitude towards the Lord. The devotee looks upon the Lord as his master and himself as the most faithful servant as exemplified in the case of Hanuman. Some look upon Him as father or mother. Others approach Him as their nearest and dearest friend as Arjuna or the playmates of Krishna's childhood did. Still others regard Him as their dear child, as in the case of Yasoda, the mother of child-Krishna. There is still another attitude in which the Lord is looked upon as the Divine Husband, and the devotee considers himself to be His consort. The Gopis of Vrindavan and Sri Chaitanya Dasa are some well-known examples of this form of devotion. There is another class of devotees whose love does not flow through any such human channel, but preads out in all directions as a river in flood, breaking the

embankments of personality and all earthly ideas. Such is the case with devotees of the type of Prahlada, Narada and Sukadeva. All these forms of devotion are equally excellent and none need be placed above the other ; for the underlying sentiment is the same, and in their mature state all of them culminate in the intense love-madness called Prema and the losing of individuality in the sweetness of the Lord, although it is true that these various attitudes are to be cultivated by individuals only with reference to their temperament and the degree of their spiritual development.

When this feeling of nearness and oneness has been firmly established in the mind of the aspirant then his devotion is characterised by Prema or unalloyed love. It is in this respect that Bhakti differs from all forms of earthly affections. The attitude of Prema as opposed to that of Kama is one of desirelessness. Kama is love or attachment entertained with some idea of worldly gain or personal pleasure ; it does not care for the happiness of the object of love if it stands in the way of one's own pleasure and well-being. Prema on the other hand is the state of mind when all thought of one's own self has been forgotten in the love of the beloved, and the highest happiness of the devotee in this state is to render service to the Lord and see that He finds satisfaction in it. There is in him an intense attachment coupled with an absence of desire for anything other than rendering service to his Lord. He asks for no boons at His hand, but surrenders himself, body, mind and soul without any reserve at the feet of the beloved Lord, and his mind is not in the least perturbed by any disease of the body or waywardness of fortune. He does not care for getting his ego dissolved in the Universal Being. He is willing to be born again and again, even under the most distressing of circumstances, if it be the will of the Lord. The only thing he cares for is to have an unflinching attachment to the Lord and a constant remembrance of Him under whatever conditions he happens to be placed. With every breath of his, he repeats the Lord's name or sings His glories, with every thought he feels His presence inside and outside his personality and with every act he offers an offering of love at His feet.

Speaking of this form of supreme love the high-souled Narada, the greatest authority on Bhakti, says as follows in his famous Bhakti Sutras: "It is the nectar of love. Having obtained it man becomes perfect, immortal and satisfied for ever. Having obtained it, man desires no more, does not feel sorrow under any conditions, does not feel jealous of anything, does not take pleasure in vanities. Having known it man becomes intoxicated with divine emotions, motionless by the thrilling joy of communion and engrossed in the bliss of God. When all thoughts, all words and all deeds are given

up unto the Lord and the least forgetfulness of Him makes one intensely miserable, then love has begun.....The nature of love is inexpressible. As the dumb man does not express what he tastes but his actions betray his feelings, so even a man established in it can not express this love in words, but his actions betray it. It can be known only when it manifests itself in some rare souls. Beyond qualities, beyond desires, ever-increasing, unbroken, finest perception, understandable only by experience is this love. When a man is blessed with this love, he sees love everywhere, he hears love everywhere, he talks love everywhere, he thinks love everywhere.....When persons having this undivided and concentrated form of love speak of God, their voices stick in their throats, they cry and weep. They purify their families and the earth that bears them. It is they who give holy places their holiness, good works their excellence and sacred books their sanctity. When a man loves God so much, his forefathers rejoice, the gods dance and the earth gets a master! To such lovers there is no difference of caste, learning, form, birth or wealth; because they are all God's....."

As an illustration of this consummation of Bhakti there is perhaps no better example than the loving devotion of the Gopis of Brindavan for Lord Sri Krishna. Born and brought up in lowly surroundings in the families of cowherds, these milk-maids of Vraja had no opportunities to study the scriptures or observe the Vedic rules or undergo any course of austerities and spiritual discipline. Theirs was a spontaneous outburst of emotion, their hearts being captivated by the charming son of Nanda, the boy Krishna of blue complexion. Perhaps in the beginning they did not know that Krishna was the Lord himself. But their minds being purified in course of time by their increasing love for the Lord, they came to know that he was none but 'the witness in the hearts of all creatures'. They were not, however, in any way attracted by the divine power and strength that Krishna manifested even from his boyhood. To them he was always their loving and gracious friend and sweetheart, the abode of all beauty and sweetness, the only object deserving their heart's adoration. All the loving ties of the world, the affection towards father, mother, husband, etc., were broken as—under in their case by the all-consuming yearning for Krishna. Not only that, they lost all consideration for themselves too; ideas of bodily well-being, family prestige, honour, shame and other egoistic notions characteristic of human beings were all absent in them. The only craving of their heart was to be in Krishna's company, and to serve and delight him. This one-pointed longing made them Krishna-mad,—made them see the whole world saturated with Krishna.

Speaking of the attachment of the Gopis towards him Sri Krishna Himself says as follows to Uddhava: "They have dedicated their mind and heart to Me. They consider Me their life and for My sake they have abandoned their relations. I support those who for My sake give up all the worldly advantages and pleasures. When I, the most beloved of all their beloved objects, am at a distance, the women of Gokula do, dear Uddhava, ever think of Me and remain lost to all other interests owing to the extreme anxiety caused by My separation. Somehow with great difficulty, the Gopis who have set their heart and soul on Me, are supporting their lives on messages of my return to them."

Another example of this type of supreme devotion is the case of Prahlada, the boy devotee. How from birth he was highly devoted to God, how his father Hiranyakasipu, the enemy of God and persecutor of devotees, tried his best to root out all ideas of devotion from his mind, how on failing to do this he tried to kill him in many ways and how Prahlada's devotion sustained him in all these trials—are all facts well-known to the readers of Hindu Puranas. Concerning the state of his mind *Srimad Bhagavata* says: "A boy as he is, he sets aside his toys, stands like a dunce having given his mind to Him; his mind possessed with the spirit, as it were, of Krishna, he knows not what this world is like. Sitting, walking about, eating, lying down, drinking, speaking, he is not conscious of these acts, living in the embraces of Govinda. Now he weeps, his consciousness mixed up with the thoughts of Vaikunta; now he laughs rejoiced with thoughts of Him; and now he sings aloud. Here he roars with an open throat, unchecked by differences, dances there; here again imagining his actions and identifying himself with Him he imitates Him. There he sits silent with his hair standing on end, being happy with His touch, and with his eyes shut with steady tears of joy and love. By means of worshipping the lotus-feet of the most glorious Lord, which course he acquired in association with sinless devotees, he makes himself very happy and often brings peace to the mind of others spoiled by bad association."

Having so far discussed the nature of supreme devotion let us now turn to a consideration of the means and disciplines which scriptures prescribe for its attainment. In *Adhyatma Ramayana* Lord Sri Ramachandra Himself tells the high-souled Sabari the nine means of attaining supreme devotion. To quote His own words: 'Therefore, O Lady, I shall tell you in brief the various means of attaining Bhakti. The first and the most important means is association with saintly men; the second is the recital of My stories; the third the singing of My attributes and the fourth the study of scriptures

which are My words. The sincere service of the preceptor considering him as Myself, and the practice of auspicious virtues like Yama and Niyama constitute the fifth means. Strict adherence to My daily worship is the sixth means and devotion to My mantram is the seventh. The eighth means consists in the reverential treatment of My devotees, the consciousness of My presence in all beings and dispassion towards all external objects combined with the control of the internal organ or mind. The ninth one is the reflection on My nature. Whoever observes these nine disciplines, whether he be woman or man or dumb creature, he will develop supreme loving devotion towards Me."

It will be noticed that the first and foremost requisite mentioned by the Lord is the contact with holy ones. This opinion is unanimously held by all Bhakti scriptures. Narada, the highest authority on Bhakti, says as follows on this point : "But the chief means for obtaining Bhakti is the mercy of the great or a particle of the Lord's grace. The company of the great is very rare and even if had, it is only fortunate souls who can enter into their vein of thought and appreciate their attitude of mind ; but when once this is done its fruit is sure and certain. Only through the grace of God can one have the company of the great. For there is no difference between Him and His devotee. That alone let us seek, that alone let us seek." Srimad Bhagavatam describes the wise ones whose company can confer this devotion as follows : "The wise desire nothing, devote their minds to Me, have a serene mind and see Me equally everywhere, are free from notions of 'I and mine', are not affected by the conflicting passions and conditions and form no attachments (by going in for worldly things). O Blessed one, in the midst of these blessed wise men My stories beneficial to men, are always told, for they absolve from sin those that listen to them." Men with such qualifications are indeed rarely to be found in this world and we can therefore understand why Narada says that it requires the special grace of God to have such company. But persons of lesser worth, persons who have turned away from the ways of the world and are sincerely following the spiritual path, may however be more commonly met with than such high-souled devotees, and even their company can do a good deal of benefit to an aspirant.

While the aspirant seeks the company of the virtuous and tries to foster in his mind the infant plant of devotion, there are various things in life which he should scrupulously avoid lest they should bring about his downfall. Of these as well as about some of the virtues he should try to cultivate for attaining perfection Sri Narada says as follows : "Contact with the evil-minded is by all means to be

avoided : for it causes lust, anger, infatuation, loss of memory, perversion of intelligence and ruin of the soul (*i.e.*, of spiritual life). In evil company these propensities which were originally like waves gradually increase in volume until they resemble an ocean. Who is able to cross this Maya ? He who gives up evil company, serves the high-souled ones and is free from selfishness ; who lives in solitude (for the practice of constant meditation), who frees himself from the binding attachment to the world, who is not affected by the three Gunas, who has no idea of possession ; who gives up attachment to the fruits of action, may even all work eventually, and is freed from the pairs of opposites ; who abandons even the commandments of the Vedas for the sake of the Lord, and thereby acquires that unflinching devotion of love for Him, such a person indeed crosses the ocean of Samsara..... Until one attains complete self-surrender to the Lord actions are not to be given up externally ; it is however necessary to practise the abandonment of their fruits. An aspirant should never hear or indulge in talks about women, wealth, atheistic doctrines and his enemies. Pride and egoism are to be given up. Having offered unto the Lord all ideas of duty and right conduct one should divert to Him all the passions of the heart like love, anger, etc...A devotee should never indulge in argumentation. He should read Bhakti scriptures, reflect thereon and undertake such actions as are conducive to the development of devotion. Never should one waste time awaiting for the day when one's mind and worldly circumstances become favourable for the practice of devotion : for, such a time never comes of itself, unless one gives up ideas of pleasure, pain, desire, pain, etc. One should practise such virtues as non-injury, truthfulness, purity, kindness, godliness, etc. Always one should be devoted to the whole-hearted adoration of the Lord, giving up all other thoughts from the mind."

Indeed when man begins to find pleasure in the company of godly persons and entertains a sincere hankering after the Lord, the other means for the acquirement of Bhakti naturally come to him. From the words and example of these the aspirant begins to feel delight in repeating the Lord's names and reading scriptures that deal with His commandments and His divine sports when He incarnated Himself in various forms in this world. In fact in the absence of the company of the good this recital of the Lord's names and stories forms its best substitute. The mind which is in this way being drawn away from the objects of the senses has to be firmly established in Him : this is to be done by the practice of moral virtues, constant remembrance of the Lord, repetition of His mantram. His worship through sacred images and fellow beings in whom He is visibly present and reflection

on His divine nature and attributes. And in the mind that has been cleansed of all its dross by constant holy thoughts shines the grace of the Lord, and along with it wells up the stream of Love Divine. Its divine effulgence transfigures a man's personality into that of a saint. It shines in him day and night as an unquenchable fire setting ablaze other kindred souls that come into contact with him. He lives in this world his appointed lease of life, a blessing to himself as well as to those who seek his company.

SELECTIONS FROM THE ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

BALAKANDA: CHAPTER II

ततो रामः स्वयं प्राह हनूमंतमुपस्थितं ॥

शृणु तत्त्वं प्रवक्ष्यामि ह्यात्मानात्मपरात्मनाम् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. Thereafter Sri Rama Himself addressing Hanuman who was close by spoke thus: "Listen, I shall tell the truths about Atma (Iswara), Anatma (Jiva) and Paratma (Brahman).

आकाशस्य यथा मेदस्त्रिविधो दृश्यते महान् ॥

जलाशये महाकाशस्तद्वच्छिन्न एव हि ॥

प्रतिविवाख्यमपरं दृश्यते त्रिविधं नमः ॥ ४५ ॥

बुद्ध्यवच्छिन्नचित्तन्यमेकं पुण्यमयापरं ॥

आभासस्त्वपरं विद्यभूतमेवं विधाचितिः ॥ ४६ ॥

राभासबुद्धेः कर्तृत्वमीदृच्छिन्नेऽविकारिणि ॥

साक्षिण्यारोप्यते भ्रान्त्या जीवत्वं च तथाऽबुद्धिः ॥ ४७ ॥

45—47. Just as three variations of Akasa in relation to a reservoir of water are noticeable, *viz.*, the vast expanse of the Akasa itself, the Akasa limited by the reservoir and the Akasa reflected in the water, similar is the case with the three aspects of the Self, *viz.*, the Supreme Self (Paramatma), the self circumscribed by the intellect¹ (Iswara) and the self reflected in the intellect (Jiva). The jivahood and the activities of the intellect with the reflected self in it (*i. e.*, the Jiva) are wrongly superimposed by the ignorant on the indivisible immutable, eternal witness—the Supreme Self.

[1. *i. e.*, by the totality of intellect which forms the principle called Maya.]

आभासस्तु मृषाबुद्धिरविद्याकार्यमुच्यते ॥
 अविच्छिन्नं तु तद्ब्रह्म विच्छेदस्तु विकल्पतः ॥ ४८ ॥
 अविच्छिन्नस्य पूर्णेन एकत्वं प्रतिपाद्यते ॥
 तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्यैश्च साभासस्याहमस्तथा ॥ ४९ ॥
 ऐक्यज्ञानं यदोत्पन्नं महावाक्येन चात्मनोः ॥
 तदाऽविद्या स्वकार्यैश्च नश्यत्येव न संशयः ॥ ५० ॥
 एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भक्तो मद्भवायोपपद्यते ॥
 मद्भक्तिविमुखानां हि शास्त्रगतेषु मुख्यतां ॥
 न ज्ञानं न च मोक्षः स्यात्तेषां जन्ममर्तैरपि ॥ ५१ ॥

48—51. This reflected Self (Jiva) is a false conception and is said to be the result of ignorance; the Brahman is indivisible; all consciousness of difference in it is due to false perception. The unity of the differentiated Jiva with Iswara is established by such statements (Mahavakya) as "*Tat Twam Asi*",¹ i.e., "Thou art That". And with the dawning of the knowledge of such identity through Mahavakya, Avidya (ignorance) with all its effects is annihilated. Thus realising, My devotee attains to My nature, while those who are devoid of devotion for Me, on the other hand, are deluded by mere scriptural studies and even after hundreds of births will obtain neither knowledge nor Moksha (salvation).

[1. In the Mahavakya *Tat Twam Asi*, *Tat* refers to the *Purnam* (Iswara) while *tvam* denotes *Avachchinmam* (the jiva), and the undifferentiated nature of the two is affirmed in the word *Asi*.]

SHAKTI AND SHAKTA.*

(A REVIEW)

This is the third and revised edition of the author's book published before under the same title. It contains several new chapters on Shakta ritual and philosophy and on the whole covers about 300 pages more than its second edition. The main purpose of the book is an exposition of the philosophy and ritual of the Shakta cult. Incidentally the author also deals with such historical problems relating to the Shakta Tantras as their origin, their relationship with the Vedas, and the probable foreign influences on the development of their rituals.

The importance of a learned and authoritative book of this kind on Shaktism can hardly be over-estimated. For, there is perhaps no other sect in India that has suffered so much misrepresentation and

* By Sir John Woodroffe. Third Edition; published by Ganesh & Co., Madras; 724 pages; price Rs. 12.

adverse criticism as Shaktism at the hands of European orientalists and their Indian disciples. Taking their stand on the practices of some degenerate followers of this school, its critics have condemned the whole of Shaktism as a philosophy of depravity and gluttony and its rituals as meaningless mummery and gibberish. The author has taken full cognisance of such criticism, and answers them by showing how such views are the outcome of ignorance and prejudice and not based on a real understanding of the Shakta scriptures and the practice of their doctrines. Far from being meaningless gibberish and mummery, the rituals of the Shaktas are based on a profound understanding of human psychology and when rightly performed, are the best means for spiritual enlightenment. In the learned chapter on the Pancha Tattvas he shows that even the genuine forms of the secret ritual of the Vamachari Shaktas which has earned for the Shakta sect as a whole a bad reputation, are based on the highest monistic principles and that far from encouraging men to indulge indiscriminately in their bestial tendencies, they are calculated to further the spiritual progress of aspirants who are fit for them and practise them with a pure motive under expert guidance. The abuses that are so common among the Shaktas of this persuasion are due to the disregard which people show towards the distinction between the three classes of aspirants—the Pasu, the Veera and the Divya Sadhakas—and the consequent adoption of rituals for which people are mentally unfit. We perfectly agree with his opinion that these rituals were evolved to suit a temperament that was common in a by-gone age and as men in general are not at the present time fit for them they should be discontinued by all except by those rare souls who are qualified for them. But to condemn the whole of Shakta Tantras on the basis of the practices limited to a small section of their corrupt adherents is an injustice to these scriptures as a whole. He shows that leaving aside these secret rites the Tantras contain philosophical conceptions and rituals that are of vital interest to humanity at all times.

The philosophy underlying the Shakta cult is expounded in many chapters scattered all through the book, but specially in the two chapters entitled "Chit-Shakti" and "Maya-Shakti". Its philosophy is the highest Advaita of the Upanishads, but differs from the Maya Vada of Shankara in as much as it admits of the reality of the phenomenal universe. It tries to reconcile this view with its conception of the Absolute by assuming aspects in the Absolute and by maintaining a theory that the change of subtle principles into gross entities does not alter the character of the former as such. Thus the Absolute Shiva realisable in the Nirvikalpa state when the distinction between

the subject and the object no longer exists, has in it a potential aspect of change called Shakti. This Shakti which is conceived as feminine is only Shiva objectifying Himself unto Himself and is always one with Him in spite of Her transformation into subtle and gross entities that form the phenomenal universe. All matter, gross and subtle, being Shakti Herself is consciousness veiled by different degrees of Maya Shakti which is an inherent power of consciousness itself.

It is in this conception of Shakti as the great Mother of the universe evolving Herself into all things gross and subtle that the peculiarity of Shakta devotionism lies. It ennobles and purifies the Shakta's attitude towards womanhood in his daily life while it enriches his spiritual pursuits by a peculiar sense of sweetness and tenderness resulting from his motherly relationship with the deity. The idea that the Mother Herself has become the universe makes the Shakta take an active interest in the affairs of the world and in the normal activities of the senses. His idea, the author points out, is not so much to renounce the world as to sublimate the objects of the senses and realise them as Mother Herself.

Here, however, we have to note our difference of opinion from the author in certain matters relating to practical spiritual life. On the basis of the Tantric conception of evolution and their prescription of a course of spiritual discipline combined with a margin of physical enjoyments to the Veera Sadhakas the author generalises that the Shakta philosophy discountenances renunciation and advocates the path of compromise between spiritual life and worldly pursuits as being all sufficient for attaining liberation. He seems to regard renunciation as an abnormal feature although he admits that in the case of some aspirants of the highest type it is permissible. We must in this connection say that while the author has correctly interpreted the philosophy underlying Shaktism, he has drawn a wrong inference regarding their bearing on practical life at least so far as the generality of mankind is concerned. For leaving aside the Veera Sadhakas, whose case is rather an abnormal feature of spiritual life, the majority of men should assiduously cultivate the spirit of renunciation. We do not, however, say that all men are at once to renounce the world, but that all should mentally try to do so and that when the spirit of dispassion has gathered strength in them it is better they renounce the worldly life in the interests of their own spiritual welfare. Renunciation in this sense does not contradict the philosophical doctrines of Shaktism. For renunciation does not imply any disregard or disrespect to Shakti, but it only means giving up of certain things for something higher which again is Shakti. Thus a man who renounces tries to shun Her in Her Avidya aspect

and seeks Her as the Vidya manifesting as discrimination, dispassion, devotion, knowledge, etc. It is just as a thirsty man desiring to quench his thirst prefers pure water to gutter water although he knows perfectly that both come under the category of water. It is true that at an advanced stage of spiritual life a person loses this distinction between the pure and the impure, the good and the vicious, and then alone is he able to see all manifestations as permeated by the Mother. Such a person is a Paramahansa, a perfected soul, who being desireless is beyond the contaminations of the world. This is not the case with ordinary men and hence it is absolutely necessary for them if they are sincere in their spiritual life, to renounce such objects of the senses and functions of the body as have the effect of contaminating their minds. To look upon all sense objects, however impure they be, and all bodily functions as manifestations of the Divine Mother and thus cultivate an attitude of reverence for them so as to counteract their baneful influence on us, is one thing, and to indulge in them professing this view is quite a different thing. The former is as sure a means for spiritual progress as the latter is for the death of the soul. For, the true sign of reverence is worship and not indulgence under whatever fine phraseology it may be cloaked. And we have the example and precept of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna who though a great Shakti Sadhaka was also the prince among tyagies (men of renunciation) and who advised that renunciation whether internal alone or combined with the external insignia as well is the essential condition for spiritual progress.

Again the author has shown in many places that the Tantras preach Bhukti-Mukti doctrine by which they promise their votaries worldly enjoyments and liberation at the same time. This is another similar notion that we have to contradict. For, worldly enjoyments are the outcome of desires while liberation or mukti is not attainable when there is the slightest trace of it clinging to the mind. If the Tantras speak of them in the same breath, it is because they take cognisance of ordinary human mentality for which the promise of liberation, in itself a state incomprehensible to undeveloped understanding, is not a sufficient inducement for the worship of God. Such persons can worship the Mother only in expectation of worldly enjoyments; but when they find that their desires are fulfilled by worshipping Her, their faith in the Mother gets confirmed, and when after repeated sufferings which are the concomitants of desires and enjoyments, they begin to have a longing for peace, their faith in the Mother which has been firmly established by long Sakama Upasana comes to their aid and creates in them that sense of dispassion and single-minded devotion which invariably precede the attainment of

liberation. It is in this sense and not simultaneously that the Mother confers Bhukti and Mukti on Her devotees.

Apart from these points we should say that the book is a correct and masterly exposition of the theory and practice of Shakta religion. The Advaitic basis of the Shakta Shastra, the psychological profundity of its rituals, and its practical importance as a Sadhana Shastra have all been expounded with great erudition and deep analysis. The Mantra theory of the Shaktas and the idea of Kundalini Yoga, two of the most abstruse doctrines of Shakta religion, have been explained with admirable lucidity. The work, on the whole, is original in the sense that the author has by a thorough study of the Tantric texts construed the philosophy underlying them. Profundity of scholarship and simplicity of exposition have been combined in it in such a way that the book will at once be attractive to scholars as well as to cursory readers. Besides, the author displays everywhere a wonderful grasp over the doctrines of the various schools of Indian philosophy, and the way in which he brings out the subtle shades of distinction between the fundamental concepts of Maya Vada, Shakti Vada, and Sankhya Shastra is remarkable for its insight and clearness. And above all the book is characterised everywhere by sound judgment combined with a sympathetic outlook—an attitude so lacking in the writings of professed orientalist and missionary writers when they deal with Indian topics, especially religious. To Sir John Woodroff the Hindu public certainly owe a deep debt of gratitude for this valuable volume. We can in fact prescribe to our readers no better book for a true understanding of the doctrines of Shakti Agamas.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE SPHERE OF WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

In India as in most other parts of the modern world the old order is changing fast and a new generation is rising up with fresh ideals and changed outlook. The impact of western thought and culture has perhaps been one of the chief causes of this rapid change. Its influence is slowly but surely penetrating even into the most inaccessible corners of our society. Even the womenfolk in spite of their proverbial conservatism are coming within its magic sphere. Referring to this influence on women and its consequences the Social Reformer sometime back made a few interesting and thoughtful remarks in an article entitled 'The Sphere of Women's Activities'. It says: "Slowly but surely our society is adapting itself to European conditions and the changes that at first seemed to be so revolutionary have been shorn of much of their novelty and are gradually coming to pass. The most important of these are the removal of the Purdah, the raising of the marriageable age for girls, the disappearance of hoary superstitions

and caste prejudices, disinclination on their part to live in joint family, increased participation in public activities and, last but by no means the least, the disappearance of the old religious spirit in them. This latter up till now has been the bulwark against the encroachment of western ideas and ideals, for however atheistic one might have been from contact with western ideas the womenfolk were religious to the back-bone and there was no danger of the heterodox ideas attacking the sanctity of our homes.....The western ideal of life has got us firmly in its grasp and it will surely be very difficult for us to break away from it. Many of us who are in sympathy with these ideals have been thrown into ecstasies at this conquest and are now loudly proclaiming that social backwardness can no longer be urged against us as a disqualification for "Swaraj". But those of us who are not so enamoured of western ideals cannot but view this with apprehension and dismay. It is very well that some of these changes will take place in our society....But the question is where we shall stop in our forward march and shall emphatically say that so far we shall go and no further or whether at all it will be possible for us to cry this halt."

Continuing the paper discusses this question and compares the eastern with western ideals of life. "The European conception of woman's duties and sphere of activities is founded on the wrong hypothesis, viz., that the aim of our life is enjoyment of the good things of life.....In addition to this as he (the western) is of a highly democratic frame of mind he wants to extend the benefits that he enjoys to the women also. Hence we find in the West the keenest competition between men and women in every sphere of life. In order to demonstrate her perfect equality with man which is an indispensable condition of her success in this keen competition she is led to all sorts of extravagance. She takes part in all manly exercises, smokes cigarettes, shingles her hair, wears short skirts, swims the channel and wants to break the speed record in motoring or aerial navigation. It must be admitted that she is quite right in doing all this if she starts with the hypothesis that she must be the successful competitor of man.

But our ideal of life is entirely different. It is not certainly enjoyment, but self-improvement through work and self-sacrifice which we are called upon to make at every step so long as we live in the family.....As the result of long specialisation women have acquired certain qualities indispensably necessary for bringing up children.....At the same time they are unfit to compete with men and to receive hard knocks with equanimity. If it be the purpose of life to help in this process of evolution, it will be the duty of every one of us to contribute our due share to it. The fact that women are required to manage the household or to bring up children does not imply any inferiority of status. Rather it should be looked upon as the noblest function that can devolve on us namely, the training of the childish mind, to weed out from it, gently and lovingly, all roots of an inherent evil nature and to sow in its place noble principles and ideas. It is women who can perform this task most efficiently.....To be brief it is right and fitting there ought to be a sharp distinction between the spheres of activities of men and women. There will be no competition between them, no foolish race to have the lion's share of the good things of life but hearty co-operation each doing his or her utmost to usher the millennium. This has been also our Hindu ideal and we don't want to deviate from it materially. It will be

within the competence of each woman to make herself thoroughly educated, to live a celibate life if she so desires and to devote herself to the acquisition of knowledge or to social service or to any other noble pursuit. It will have our entire approval and unstinted praise. But it is to be devoutly wished that our women under no circumstances will try to imitate the European women in all the frivolous things that they are doing to demonstrate their equality with men....."

This opinion regarding the sphere of women's activities seem to be quite in keeping with the needs of modern times. The old idea that every woman is born to be a wife and a mother will no longer be acceptable to a number of women of talents and education. Such active and independent spirits will, by leading a life of virginity, dedicated to the cause of learning, service of country and humanity or the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, be more useful to themselves as well as to others than by confining the benefits of their talents to the narrow circle of the family. Ideals of such womanhood are not wanting in the ancient history of our country. In order to afford an opportunity for women as well as men to decide for themselves whether they like to lead a celibate life or not, our society should give up the custom of early marriage which forces boys and girls into the life of matrimony even before they reach the age of discretion. The majority of women will have, however, to marry and assume motherhood, and they have to consider, for their own happiness as well as of the family, that their first duty consists in ministering to the needs of the members of their family. Even in this limited circle there is no dearth of scope for the exercise of idealism for one who is endowed with the same. It is quite undesirable that in our society also women discarding all spiritual values of life should ape their western sisters in the matter of seeking for pleasure and competing with man for the good things of life.

THE IDEAL FOR THE YOUNG

In this world a nation or an individual without a definite ideal to work with is like a ship without a helm in a tempest-tossed sea. Life in such a case is a sort of drifting, an aimless pursuit after an unsubstantial something. The feeling that a man is likely to experience at the end of such a life is one of utter despair and of irremediable remorse for having spent his precious life-time in vain. Hence the necessity of forming ideals early in life, if life is to be lived profitably to oneself as well as to others. The mind of the youth untrammelled by the cares and responsibilities of life is the best soil for the nurture of noble ideals. But unfortunately the youth of India being prematurely burdened with the heavy responsibilities of family life is seldom found inspired with that passion for freedom and that ambition for noble achievements which characterise young minds fired with high ideals in life. Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, addressing the students at the Hoogly District Students' Conference, spoke on this point describing to his audience what he calls the ideal of the present age and also a programme of work for the upliftment of the motherland. We quote below his thoughtful speech in part.

".....The ideal that used to enthuse the student community of Bengal, say, fifteen years ago, was the ideal of Swami Vivekananda. Under the hypnotic spell of that glorious ideal, the Bengalee youth went in with grim determination for a life of purity and spiritual power freed from all taint of selfishness and shabbiness. At the root of the construction of the society and nation lies the

unfoldment of individuality. That is why Swami Vivekananda was never tired of repeating that "man-making" was his mission.

"When a new era was ushered in our country before the age of Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was our guide. From the age of Ram Mohan onwards the desire for freedom in India has been manifesting itself through all sorts of movements. And when in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, the soul-stirring message of Swami Vivekananda—"Freedom, freedom is the song of the soul"—burst the locked gates of the Swamiji's heart and came forth in a flood of irresistible might, the whole country caught it up and nearly went mad!

"Swami Vivekananda it was who had on the one hand, boldly asked his fellow-men to shed all sorts of fetters and be men in the truest sense of the term; and, on the other hand, laid the foundation of true nationalism in India by preaching the essential unity of all religions and sects.....It was in the mouth of Aurobindo that we heard the message of political freedom for the first time. And when we come down to the year 1921, along with the message of non-co-operation we got another thing from the lips of Mahatma Gandhi: "There can be no Swaraj without the masses, and until we can rouse a hunger for freedom amongst them". This potent message became clearer still in the life of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan. In the course of his Lahore speech, he very clearly declared that the kind of swaraj he wanted, was not for the few but for all, for the masses in general. The ideal of "Swaraj for the masses" was put up by him before his countrymen at the All India Labour Conference.

".....In our country three large communities are lying absolutely dormant; these are the women, the so called depressed classes and labouring masses. Let us go to them and say; "You also are human beings and shall obtain the fullest rights of men. So arise, awake, shed your attitude of inactivity and snatch your legitimate rights....."

The idea of 'man-making' which Swamiji used so much to emphasise upon should be made the basis of their life by the young men of our country. By the word 'man-making' he meant an all-round development of human personality—of body, mind and soul. To have a strong body and a well-informed mind does not complete this ideal. It is not, however, so much the number of ideas that a man has acquired as the impression they have made on his personality that counts. Swamiji once defined education as "the nervous association of certain ideas." By this is meant that not until ideas have been interwoven with the very being of a man, could they be reckoned as real and vital possessions of him. Thus to be a real man one has to be inspired by the glowing vision of a higher life enlivened by the cultured emotions of one's heart. Along with it should be developed a strong sense of purity, of truth and of sincerity which should in fact form the very foundation of a man's mentality. This is the ideal of 'man-making,' and the activities of a person who is firmly established in such an ideal whether they be political, humanitarian or spiritual, will result in lasting benefit to humanity. When young men are equipped in this way they will be better fitted to carry out the scheme of work which Mr. Bose places before them, namely the awakening of the dormant sections of Indian population—the women, the depressed classes and the labouring masses.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A DEVOTEE PASSES AWAY

We regret to record the death which took place on the 13-10-29 at 9 p. m. at Amburpet, North Arcot Dt. of Mr. C. Venkatasawmy Naidu an ardent admirer and lover of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission since its inception. He was, so to say, the first person in the North Arcot Dt. to spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and the ideals of the Mission by organizing and delivering lectures, and when Swami Ramakrishnananda was sent to Madras to found a centre there Mr. Naidu placed himself in close touch with him and under his inspiration and personal guidance was instrumental in establishing a monastery at Nattaram Palli and a few Vivakananda Sanghams in such places as Vaniyambadi, Ambur, Pudupet, etc. in the district. Till the end of his life he did not relax his labours for the upliftment of the people of the district by whom he was loved and held in great regard. May his soul rest in peace.

ST. LOUIS CENTRE OF THE VEDANTA SOCIETY, U. S. A.

The Secretary of this Centre, Mrs. O. H. Vornbrock, has sent us a brief Report of its origin and activities. It says that this Centre was the outgrowth of the very inspiring lectures delivered by Swami Prabhavananda in St. Louis in October 1927. Swami Prabhavananda appointed the Executive Officers. After he had left, a Constitution and By-Laws were drawn up; notices were sent out early in January 1928 to those who had signified their desire to become members of the Society, and the Constitution was adopted.

As there was no other resident teacher, the President, Mr. O. Wade Fallert, took charge of the meetings, instructing the members according to Vedanta Philosophy.

Dealing with persons of unequal spiritual development, many of whom were entire strangers to him, Mr. Fallert decided to begin with fundamental principles of Vedanta Philosophy. A lecture on the Seven Principles of Man was the first, followed by such subjects as Life in India; Introduction to Raja Yoga; Karma Yoga; Effect of Karma on Character; Karma Yoga; The Greatness of Each in His Own Place; The Secret of Work; What is Duty?; We Help Ourselves, not the World; Non-Attachment; Freedom.

When there was still no other teacher in sight, other discourses were given on such subjects as Teachings of Vedanta Philosophy; Inner Teachings of Hindu Philosophy; Prana; Psychic Prana; Karma Yoga; Bhakti Yoga; Four lectures on Jnana Yoga; Dharma; Spiritual Consciousness; four lectures on The Voice of the Silence; Involution; Evolution; Ascent of Man; Metempsychosis; Spiritual Evolution. It will be observed that some of the lectures deal with scientific matters; it has been the special mission of Mr. Fallert to show the steady progress of scientific research toward absolute knowledge, and to interpret Eastern teachings in terms of Western phraseology and thought.

It has been a rare privilege to those attending the lectures, to listen to such profound utterances, a veritable feast of reason and flow of soul. The attendance during this time varied, with nine as the lowest and twenty-four as the highest. Extremes of temperature such

as blizzard of winter and torrid heat of summer account for the divergence, although new faces were to be seen at all of the meetings, with a nucleus of steady attendance. There has been a profound atmosphere of spirituality at all of the meetings; and by his loving and conscientious efforts, the way has been paved, and Mr. Fallert has shed light on the path for those of us who are striving toward greater spiritual unfoldment.

PRIMARY EDUCATION: R. K. MISSION'S APPEAL.

The value of education as a powerful factor in the building up of a nation is well-known to all thinking people. The civilised countries of the West owe their present enviable position to the extensive spread of education. And the United States of America tops the list because she has made education universal in the country. Our country presents a sad contrast to this. Witness as a result, the depths of degradation to which our masses have sunk. They are always poor, because they do not know how to improve their material condition. They are constantly ill and die premature deaths, because they lack proper food and clothing and are entirely ignorant of the laws of health. They are an easy prey to superstitions and are at the mercy of every quack and imposter that chooses to lay his hand on them. They cannot distinguish between what is good for them and what is bringing about their ruin. The condition of their women, in particular, is most deplorable. They are the very picture of helplessness in its most pitiable aspect. No man can realise their sufferings; to do this he has to be a woman. And as every body knows, child mortality in India is appalling. To make a long story short the Indian masses are living in a condition that is inhuman, heart-rending and utterly unworthy of any civilised society.

This state of things must be immediately stopped. The Indian masses are also human beings, and as such it is the duty of every one of us to set them on their feet. Our religion teaches the immanence of God in all beings. It will be the highest kind of worship if we try to help these millions of mute, suffering men, women and children—our own countrymen, our brethren. It is the worship of the Living God. Swami Vivekananda spoke again and again, in glowing terms, of the need of mass education as a solvent for the country's problems. It will interest the public to know that in addition to our other activities we have been able to start some 65 schools, mostly primary, some of which also impart technical instruction. What we now want is, among other things, to add at least a hundred primary schools as soon as the necessary funds are forthcoming. It is upon the secure foundations of education that the structure of national well-being rests. In the name of our suffering millions we appeal to our generous countrymen for funds to carry out this educational work. We are confident that our appeal will meet with a prompt response. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses:

- (1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Howrah.
- (2) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 182-A, Muktaram Babu Street, Calcutta.
- (3) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazari, Calcutta.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, Dacca

During the year 1927-28 the R. K. Mission, Dacca had been carrying on a many-sided scheme of work. For the propagation of Vedantic ideals it conducted many religious classes on Hindu Scriptures and the writings of Swami Vivekananda in the Mission premises and in several parts of the city. On Ekadasi days and on special occasions Bhujanas and Kirtans were held. Under the auspices of the Mission several occasional lectures were delivered by the Swamies of the R. K. Mission and by some outside gentlemen. The birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and other great Acharayas were celebrated.

The Mission conducted three schools, two for boys and one for girls, and also a public library and reading room having 2141 books and 36 periodicals. It also rendered aid to a few helpless students by making arrangements for the prosecution of their studies. The outdoor dispensary of the Mission rendered help to 4675 persons on the whole besides administering medicines to a good number of patients in their own homes. It undertook cholera relief in four villages and collected a sum of Rs. 101 and 243 cloths for famine relief at Balurghat. It distributed 69 mds. of rice as doles among 30 helpless families and 21 persons were given pecuniary help, the amount of such help being Rs. 15-7-6.

Present needs of the Mission : (1) Rs. 4,000 are required for the purchase of a piece of land within the Mission compound which at present is held on lease. (2) For the construction of a pucca drain to the west of the Mission tank a sum of Rs. 2,000 is needed. (3) A permanent fund for the maintenance of the various activities already started by the Mission. (4) Rs. 2,000 are required as initial expenditure for the intended programme of village schools and a circulating library with arrangements for magic lantern lectures.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME, BANGALORE CITY

The 10th Annual Report of the R. K. Home, Bangalore, shows that the institution gave free board and lodging to 16 students, most of them reading in college classes. Religious classes and debating-society meetings were regularly held for the instruction of the boarders. An Old Boy's Association was organised to keep the old students in touch with the institution. As regards the Home finances the receipt amounted to Rs. 1,937 and the expenses to Rs. 1,712-15-8. The closing cash balance was Rs. 3,991-6-0, including a sum of Rs. 3,450-0-0 in fixed deposit. The average cost per boarder was Rs. 10-15-0. As the Home authorities want to raise the strength of the Home to 25, its expenses in future will be greater. The management therefore appeals to the public for more help.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, KANKHAL, HARDWAR

The 28th annual report of the R. K. Mission Sevashram, Kankhal shows a good record of useful work by way of giving relief to the sick and the distressed. The Mission maintains a hospital, having an indoor and outdoor section. The total number of indoor patients was 791, and that of the outdoor patients 38,402 including new and repeated cases. The patients in both sections consisted chiefly of poor pilgrims, Sadhus and Vidyarthis. A free night school attached to the Sevashram is maintained with a view to impart primary education

to the children of the local depressed classes. The number on the rolls was 34. There is also a library and reading room ; they are open to the public.

The present needs of the Sevashram : (1) *Workers' Quarters*, for which the estimated cost is Rs. 8,000. (2) *Night School for Depressed Classes*. The building may be constructed at a cost of Rs. 5,000. (3) *Guest House, etc.* The cost of this building will come up to Rs. 11,000. (4) *Rest House for the Relatives of Patients*. The estimated cost of a building for this purpose is Rs. 5,000. (5) *Permanent endowment fund for the Sevashram*. For the 66 beds that the Sevashram maintains a Permanent Fund of Rs. 1,98,000 is required, allotting a capital investment of Rs. 3,000 at 6 % interest per bed. At present 12 beds are already thus provided for. The medical department will be strengthened shortly by the appointment of an Ayurvedic physician with two assistants. A permanent endowment fund of Rs. 4,000 at 6 % interest will be required to serve this Ayurvedic department. (8) The Ashrama workers find it very difficult at present to carry on their spiritual practices for want of a proper place for it. A separate temple building is required to remove this want and the estimated cost of it is Rs. 3,000. (9) *Sevashram at Hrishikesh*—An urgent appeal has come from the leading Sadhus of Hrishikesh, the favourite resort of Sadhus for practising Tapasya, to open a branch of the Sevashrama there. At present there is no arrangement at Hrishikesh to relieve the sufferings of Sadhus when they fall ill. The importance of this work of serving Sadhus will be amply realised by the generous public, and it is hoped they will gladly come forward to help in this pious work. The present requirements to start the work are as follows :—(1) A piece of land suitably located at a cost of Rs. 5,000. (2) A hospital building consisting of 4 rooms accommodating 4 patients each and veranda at a cost of Rs. 8,000. (3) An Out-door Dispensary with necessary rooms for stores, consultation, dispensing, operation, dressing, etc., at the cost of Rs. 5,000. (4) Workers' Quarters costing Rs. 6,000. (5) A kitchen at a cost of Rs. 1,000. (6) A well costing Rs. 2,000. (7) Latrine costing Rs. 500. (8) As initial expenditure to carry on the work, at least Rs. 100 per month is required,—Rs. 50 for establishment and Rs. 50 for indoor patients.

In contributing to these various above-mentioned needs of the Sevashram, arrangements can be made for commemorating the memory of dear friends and relatives.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”
“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER

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माऽगारदारात्मजवितवन्धुषु
सङ्गो यदि स्याद्भगवत्प्रियेषु नः ।
यः प्राणवृत्त्योः परितुष्ट आत्मवान्
सिद्धयत्यद्गुरात् तथेन्द्रियप्रियः ॥
स्वस्त्यस्तु विश्वस्य खलः प्रसीदतां
ध्यायन्तु भूतानि शिवं मियो धिया ।
मनश्च भद्रं भजतामधोच्चज
आवेश्यतां नो मतिरप्यहैतुक्ती ॥

If our mind is to be attached to anything, let it not be to house, wife, son, wealth and relatives, but may it be ever devoted to those who are beloved of the Lord ; whoever is satisfied with the bare means of subsistence and has control over the mind easily attains Mukti, but not those who are attached to the senses.

May the worlds be peaceful, may the wicked become gentle, may all creatures engage their intellect in thoughts of mutual welfare and their minds in what is auspicious, may our minds be immersed in the Lord Adhokshaja in disinterested love.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

IV

ECSTASY AND SUSPENSION OF BREATH. ATTAINMENT OF DIVINE VISION ON THE RUSHING OF THE "GREAT ENERGY"

As the conversation is proceeding, there arrived a few invited Brahmo devotees among whom are some Pandits and high Government officials.

The Master is speaking on the suspension of breath. Continuing the topic he says, "When Arjuna pierced the target—the eye of a fish, his gaze was fixed on the eye alone and not on anything else. He did not even see any other part of the fish. In such a state of concentration one gets Kumbhaka—one's breath stops by itself. One of the signs of God-vision is the rushing of the "Great Energy" in the spinal chord to the brain. If a person then passes into Samadhi he comes to get a vision of God."

MERE LEARNING, MATERIAL PROSPERITY, POWER, FAME,
POSITION—ALL FALSE

Sri Ramakrishna (looking at the newly arrived Brahmo devotees): Persons who are merely learned and possess no devotion for God speak in a confused way. A Pandit named Samadhyayi once said, 'God is without joy. You have to make him enjoyable with your love and devotion!' Just see, He who is described in the Vedas to be of the very nature of joy, is spoken of as joyless! These words indicate that the person who speaks thus has never known what God is. Hence he talks in such an incoherent manner.

"Once a person said, 'my uncle has got a cowshed full of horses.' By this we are to understand that there were no horses at all; for horses are never kept in a cowshed. (All laugh.)

* Translated from M.'s diary originally published in Bengali.

“There are persons who are proud of their material prosperity,—of power, fame, position and such other things. But all these are evanescent. None of these will follow one after death. There is a song to this effect :—

‘Think over this, oh my soul, that there is none who is really thine own; and verily thou dost wander in the world for nothing. Being caught in the net of Maya, do not, therefore, forget the Divine Mother.

Will she for whom thou worriest thyself accompany thee (after death)? That very beloved of thine will sprinkle (cow-dung) and water (on the spot polluted by thy corpse) with a view to ward off evil.

For a few days only do others regard one as a master. But know this, the same master will be thrown away when the Lord of time (death) makes his appearance.’

THE GREAT ANTIDOTE FOR PRIDE

“Again, one should not feel proud of wealth. If you think you are rich, know there are others richer than yourself, and others again still more rich than these. When the firefly makes its appearance in the evening, it thinks, ‘I am giving light to the world.’ But as soon as the stars make their appearance in the sky, its pride is humbled. And then the stars begin to think, ‘We are illuminating the whole world.’ A little later there rises the moon, the stars fade away as it were in shame. Then the moon thinks, ‘The whole world is smiling in my light. I alone am the giver of light.’ Soon after the dawn breaks and then rises the sun. The moon pales into insignificance and after a while it is seen no more.

“If the rich people think in this way they will no longer feel proud of their riches.”

On the occasion of the festival, Manilal had arranged for various kinds of delicacies. He took great care in entertaining the Master and the assembled devotees sumptuously. It was very late at night when they all left for their homes, but none felt uncomfortable in any way.

IN DEFENCE OF HINDUISM—III

In our defence of Hinduism we have hitherto confined ourselves to an analysis of the universal principles that stand as the background of Hindu religion and have also tried to meet the unwarranted charges laid at its door by some critics of the Christian fold. We shall close the subject with a succinct review of *the theory of reincarnation and the law of Karma* which form in fact the very corner-stone of Hindu philosophy. For the greatness of Hindu religion lies not in a blind belief in a certain set of dogmas or in the intricacies of ceremonial worship but in the logical consistency of *its essential doctrines* which have been made the target of persistent attack and ridicule by the orthodox Western theologians. The seers of ancient India went far beyond the surface of human existence and 'plumbed life's dim profound' in their quest after Truth. It was these seers of India who have solved once for all the problem of life and enlightened humanity on the mysteries of birth and death with the light of their spiritual knowledge. Nothing has indeed been more complex and elusive than the nature of man and nothing has been more persistent and real than the craving of the human soul to unravel the tangled skein of life. Though the findings of men have varied in different climes according to their spiritual capacity and genius, it cannot be denied that it is the resultant of their search for the ultimate reality of being, that forms the background of the religious systems of the world. Religion in its general concept has three component parts, *viz.*, philosophy, mythology and ritual; but in its highest sense it is nothing short of realisation of the fundamental verity of existence on the basis of which the philosophy of life has been attempted to be built by the great thinkers of the past and the present. The greatness of a religious system can therefore be judged in the light of the sublimity of its philosophical background as well as of the scope it provides for the play of human intelligence and the aspiration of the soul. As religion is the very vital sap of a race, its philosophical achievement may be reckoned as the touch-stone of its cultural greatness. For it has been our unfailing experience that a religion without a high standard of moral system and a rational philosophy as its background can hardly maintain its existence for long and its contribution, though not altogether useless, has been of very little permanent value and interest to mankind. The present political servitude of the Indians has been advanced by some Westerners as an argument against India's claim to the greatness of her philosophical or cultural achievement for they hold that the robust nationalism or political virility is

the true index of the intrinsic worth of a culture and religion. And in their opinion, the law of Karma and the theory of reincarnation which are deemed by the Hindus as the most essential principles of their philosophy, have proved to be the *cause of their social debacle* as well as the greatest stumbling blocks in the path of India's national advancement. These doctrines, they say, have led to the *enfeeblement of her will* and to her eventual *political thralldom*: for their philosophy with its sombre note of pessimism is a purely *idealistic* one that takes no cognisance of the *realistic* aspect of life and characterises all struggle for freedom as unprofitable and vain as a search for water in a dreary desert. Thus the Hindu philosophy is nothing short of "an untutored savage fancy borrowed probably from aboriginal tribes!"

Most of the Western thinkers have thus been led to assume that the material prosperity is the only criterion of cultural greatness, and the country that lacks in it bears the eternal brand of inferiority in all other branches of life. Whatever grain of truth there may be in such a sweeping generalisation, it cannot be denied that this dismal conclusion is the result of their utilitarian conception of religious life and the ignorance of the cultural history of other races in the world. So far as India is concerned, the vision of the Western critics has hardly stretched beyond the span of the last one thousand years, and has thus left out of account the unbroken record of India's independent existence for countless years even before the birth of christianity. India which is the very cradle of human civilisation and before whose cultural traditions the West is a mere child of yesterday has lived a life of glorious independence in the past and even now maintains her cultural integrity in spite of so many years of political subjection, persecution and changes, with the very same philosophy and religion which have now been stigmatised by some Western people as the product of the wild imagination of a savage race. But the history of human thought tells us that even the ancient Egyptians, the Persians, the Chaldeans and the Pharisees of the Hebrews held on, though in a crude form, to the theory of metempsychosis and were more or less influenced like some of the brightest intellectual luminaries of the ancient Greek world, by the very same philosophy of the Hindus. To crown all, even Christ himself on whose lips were re-echoed the fascinating figures of the Upanishads and the wise sayings of the Buddhists was a staunch believer in this doctrine of reincarnation. But after all 'modern' christianity has outgrown that 'savage fancy' of its founder and has emerged out from the chrysalis of the past superstition as a 'virile' and 'living' force to serve the political and commercial interests of its adherents! But the inner craving of the human

soul can hardly be silenced for good by the pragmatic philosophy that obtains to-day in the West, and that is why many mighty intellects of the Occidental world have boldly shaken off the siren charm of this materialistic philosophy and ventured out into the virgin land of the spirit. By a comparative study of the religious systems of the world they have come to the conclusion that it is the theory of reincarnation which runs parallel with the doctrine of the eternity of the human soul, that has fewer difficulties to face than other rival hypotheses. It is an interesting phenomenon that some of the greatest thinkers of the modern age have accepted this doctrine as the basic principle of their philosophy. Schopenhauer, the great German thinker says, "As a matter of fact there does exist a connection between the birth of the newly appearing beings and the death of those that are worn out..... Every new-born being comes fresh and blithe into the new existence, and enjoys it as a free gift ; but there is and can be nothing freely given. Its fresh existence is paid for by the old age and death of a worn-out existence which has perished, but which contained the indestructible seed out of which the new existence has arisen ; they are one being." No less pregnant are the statements of Fichte, the celebrated German thinker. "Indood," says he, "one needs only to understand the full meaning of the metaphysico-physiological axiom, that in reality nothing can be created or annihilated, to recognise that the soul must have existed prior to its becoming visible in a physical body." Hume the great English philosopher, though a nihilist, admits in his essay on Immortality : "The metempsychosis is there the only system of this kind that philosophy can listen to." So Mr. Lessing most pertinently asks : "Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest ? because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once ?Why should I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh existence ?" Similar quotations can be furnished from the authoritative writings of such distinguished geniuses of the Western world as the great Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, the German philosophers Schelling and Leibnitz, the great German poets and writers Goethe and Herder, and also the French and English scientists Flammarion, Figuier and Brewster. While the great minds are thus gradually veering round to this conception of human existence, there is still no dearth of fanatical zealots in the West who have found in this theory nothing but the seeds of the national and moral degeneration of the Hindus !

The strongest argument that is generally advanced against the Hindu theory of metempsychosis is the *loss of memory* of the new-born soul regarding all its antenatal experiences. The orthodox Christian

theologians hold that the individual soul is the *creation* of God and *the soul's continued life after death* is a special reward of absolute faith in the Christ. There is a school of modern scientists who instead of admitting the theory of transmigration of the soul, posit that the sum-total of the experiences from the little protoplasm up to the highest human being is inherent in every man and it has come down from body to body through *hereditary transmission*. This class of materialists concede that no child is born with a clean, white page of a mind but each child comes to the world with a fund of manifold tendencies (Samskaras) acquired through past actions; but they persistently cling to the belief that these tendencies are transmitted through the law of heredity. Besides, there is another school of thought that attempts to explain away the diversities of tendencies manifest in man or animal by *instinct*. And we find also that every sort of anomaly in the world has been attempted to be explained away by *an appeal to the all-merciful God* who as the highest dispenser of justice lords over the universe. But a careful scrutiny of the above hypotheses proves the absurdity of the proposition of an absolute creation on which the whole fabric of the Western theological belief has been built. For creation is limitation and presupposes a combination that must end in dissolution. So, as a matter of fact a soul cannot, by its very nature, be created; for, in that case, the theory of the award of immortality by God as a result of faith in the Christ would stand self-contradicted. Moreover, the diversities of human experiences in this life cannot be justified without characterising God as cruel and partial. For if God is the creator, why should there be so much of suffering and misery among men for no fault of theirs? Why should some be born with a silver spoon in their mouth and some be doomed to drag on a miserable existence from the morning till the evening of their life? Besides, if this be the first birth the liberty of the man is altogether robbed of,—for his path would be marked out by the experience of others; there is thus no freedom of the man to build his own destiny. This kind of belief in the creation of the soul is the genesis of what is known in the Western world as fatalism or pre-ordination that has been responsible for all kinds of inhuman atrocities perpetrated by the Mussalmans and the Christians upon the so-called infidels or heathens; for this theory of fatalism has armed both the communities with the fantastic belief that the heathens are born to be eternal victims of their swords! Thus in the white heat of a holy enthusiasm, all sense of logical consistency has been sacrificed at the altar of fanaticism. For what philosophical justification can there be in the theory that a thing with a beginning shall not come to an end? In fact it is a truism that 'nothing which ends at

one point can be without a beginning and nothing that begins at one point can be without an end.' The theory of an absolute beginning is not only logically unsound but thrusts the entire burden of impurity in the world upon God. These are some of the anomalies which cannot be explained away simply by a mere childish appeal to God.

As already pointed out the loss of memory has also been considered to be a distinctive proof against the theory of pre-existence of the soul. That this notion is based on an erroneous assumption is evident from the experiences of many great souls who after their spiritual illumination have been able to remember all about their past lives. For what comes to the brain is the resultant, the sum-total of the impressions acquired in the past, with which the mind comes to inhabit the new body. All the impressions of the past lie dormant in the subliminal self and can be discovered with the advance of spiritual knowledge. In Patanjali's Yoga aphorisms we find a distinct corroboration of this statement. He says: "संस्कारसाक्षात्करणतः पुर्वजति-ज्ञानम् ॥ १८ ॥"—(By perceiving the Samskaras one acquires the knowledge of past lives). In short "each experience that we have, comes in the form of a wave in the Chitta, and this subsides and becomes finer and finer but is never lost. It remains there in minute form, and if we can bring this wave up again, it becomes memory. So if the Yogi can make a *Samyama* on these past impressions in the mind, he will begin to remember all his past lives."—So says Swami Vivekananda in his commentary on the aforesaid Yoga aphorism. The pictures of the events of our previous lives may be invisible to us at present but if we close the doors of our senses from outside contact, then by focussing the light of consciousness and concentrating the mental rays we shall be able to know and remember all about our past lives. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita emphatically declares to his friend, Arjuna, "ब्रह्मि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन । तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्स्य परंतप ॥"—(Unnumbered births were shed behind by Me and thee, O Arjuna. All these to me are present now, while thou, O friend, rememberest not). So also did Buddha the Light of Asia, know how many times he had to incarnate himself on earth for the redemption of humanity. Christ himself did once remark: "Before Abraham was, I am" and with reference to John the Baptist he said: "This is Elias who is said to have come." It is a sheer perversity of human intelligence to say that our childhood did not exist simply because we do not remember it at an advanced age. As a matter of fact we can no more negate our past existence than we can do our childhood. Indeed, memory revives only when one stands face to face with Truth, and with the spiritual

Illumination when the memory brings back the past to men, they stand as a hero setting at defiance all the storms and frowns of the world and smile in the midst of the gravest calamities of life.

The anomaly that we meet with in this world of ours cannot be solved by an appeal to God. The diversities of tendencies and powers that are displayed by children or by men in general cannot be explained on any other ground than that of previous experiences with which the soul is born in the new body. This has been partially admitted by a school of modern scientists who while holding the view that every one is born with a fund of accumulated tendencies generated by past conscious actions, add that 'matter and its transformations answer for all that we have' and as such there is no necessity for supposing the existence of a soul. The results of actions, they say, are recorded in matter and it is by the law of heredity that the sum-total of the experiences of parents and forbears come down to us from body to body. This theory can be admitted to be valid in so far as it furnishes the material to the soul. For we by our past actions conform ourselves to a certain birth in a body that is the fittest instrument for the display of our tendencies. Even if it be argued that mental impression can at all be recorded in matter, it still remains a puzzle how it can be transmitted from father to son. In the words of Swami Vivekananda we may ask: "Through the bioplasmic cell? How could that be? because the father's body does not come to the child *in toto*. The same parents may have a number of children; then from the theory of hereditary transmission, where the impression and the impressed (material) are one, it rigorously follows that, by the birth of every child, the parents must lose a part of their own impression, or, if the parents would transmit the whole of their impressions, then, after the birth of the first child, their minds would be a vacuum." In short the theory does not stand a serious scrutiny. Even such a gigantic will as that of a Buddha or a Jesus remains quite unexplained. For if it be a case of hereditary transmission, the gulf between Joseph the carpenter and Jesus the Saviour or between Suddhodhan the king and Gautama the Enlightened (Buddha) still presents an insoluble enigma; for while Buddha and Jesus are worshipped by millions of souls, their parents could hardly secure a niche in the temple of fame even beyond the pale of their society. So the power manifested in a Buddha or a Jesus is not the result of hereditary transmission but has accumulated and grown bigger and bigger from age to age in the particular soul itself which has ultimately burst upon the human society in a Buddha or a Christ. Physical heredity can at most account for a man's physical configuration but not the differences in the mental qualities or aptitudes

between the parents and the children. This can only be explained by one's own Karma that leaves an indelible impression on the mind which with all its accumulated tendencies migrates and manufactures body after body. It is thus 'the mind that takes its birth and rebirth, and uses the material which is most proper for it, and the mind which has made itself fit for only a particular kind of body, will have to wait until it gets that material.'

Attempt has also been made to explain the diversities of tendencies and actions by instinct in man and animal. It has been urged that it is due to instinct that the ducks hatched even by hens fly to the water, the chickens learn to pick up food when they burst out of their eggs and it is through instinct alone that even the toddling children stumbling at the threshold of life fear death and cry for shelter. It may here be pointed out that it is on this very ground that the Hindus have built their theory of reincarnation. For what is instinct but a degenerated or involved reason? What is done with conscious efforts and attention becomes through constant practice instinctive or automatic samskaras. The fear of death in a child, the tendency of the new-born duckling for taking to water, and all involuntary actions in human being, which have become instinctive, are the outcome of past experiences. That is the reason why the child is instinctively afraid of death, for the experience of pain is already stored up there in the child and that is also the reason why there is so much clinging to life even witnessed in the wisest of souls in human society. Instinct, properly understood, instead of being an argument against the theory of reincarnation furnishes the real solution to Hindu theory of metempsychosis. Man is a combination of body, mind and Self (Atman). And it is the mind (soul) that, like a whirlwind, gathering the experiences from birth to birth goes on rotating until the whole momentum generated by the accumulated tendencies spends itself and the mind loses its identity in the Self. It is the Atman which is the only unchangeable Reality that has neither birth nor death, that stands as an eternal Witness of all the passing shows of human existence. It is Nature that moves and acts, creates and uncreates, builds and unbuilds its destiny. This Nature has, in the Hindu philosophy, been identified with Maya or mind and in the Western philosophy, with time, space and causation. When the Atman ignorantly thinks that it is moving and not Nature, it is in bondage, and this Atman in bondage is called Jiva. It is therefore this Jiva that acts and suffers and it is he alone who by his own Karma passes through the endless cycle of births and deaths and again it is he that by realising his real nature through knowledge can transcend all limitations and be established in its ineffable glory and

beauty. The idea that there are differentiations and consequently imperfections is, from the standpoint of the Absolute, a superimposition caused by ignorance or *Maya*; but there is still a reality upon which these mistaken notions appear. "Hence", as Mr. J. J. Goodwin has put it, "the Vedanta is neither pure realism nor pure idealism; and yet either of these is explicable in the light of Vedanta, in as much as it says there is a Reality which appears as material and yet is not material. In that appearance is all that is true of realism. In the statement that, given an infinite, there cannot also be an independent finite lies all that is true of idealism." Thus the charge against the Hindu philosophy that it is purely an idealistic one falls through when it is scrutinised with a dispassionate and unbiased mind from the standpoint of the Advaita philosophy.

From what has hitherto been said, it is now distinctly clear that without previous experience no knowledge is possible in this world, and that this experience is already stored up in the *mind* in a potential form and not in the *body*, and is transmitted through mind from birth to birth. Thus the assumption of the pre-existence of soul is a logical necessity and repudiates the theory of absolute creation by God. Besides, the totality of impressions that make up and determine the future birth is the result of one's own actions (*Karma*), otherwise, as previously pointed out, the All-merciful character of God stands hopelessly challenged. In short "The human mind is a ball which is being hit about the room of the world all the time, and our passage out of it is determined by the force of all these blows." Swami Vivekananda has compared human life to a chain with a black link and a white link alternately, without beginning and without end. "This infinite chain," says he, "is a repetition of the two links, black and white, and multiplied infinitely, becomes a whole chain. All our lives, past, present, and future, are one infinite chain, each link of which is one life, with two ends, birth and death without beginning and without end." So we see that the human life is a revolving process maintained by the momentum of our own impressions gathered through work. The man who sets the wheel in motion must therefore bear the consequences. Thus psychologically nothing can happen without a pre-existing cause and this causation is identical with *Karma*, and as such the law of *Karma* is tantamount to the law of causality, of inevitable cause and sequence. It is by the impulsion of this irresistible law of *Karma* that man acts and suffers. But the questions have been asked by saints and sinners: is there no way out of this interminable chain of birth and death? Is human life a helpless tiny boat tossed to and fro in the ocean of matter by the waves of cause and effect? "The heart sinks at the idea," says Swami Veka-

nanda, "yet this is the law of nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape? —was the cry that went up from the bottom of the heart of drespair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings: 'Hear ye children of immortal Bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. Knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death once for all.'.....ye divinities on earth——sinners? It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, oh lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep. You are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; you are not matter, you are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter." "Thus it is," continues the Swami, "that the Vedas proclaim not a dreadful combination of unforgiving laws, not an endless prison of cause and effect, but at the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One, 'by whose command the wind blows the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth.'" Thus it is that the sphere of operation of the law of causation is limited; it can hardly extend beyond the range of mind which has brought the universe into being. As man with his Jiva-consciousness lives in time and space he is therefore subject to the law of causation. But by knowing the secret of work he can even untie the gordian knot and transcend all laws however uncompromising and persistent they may seem, for the infinite potentiality is there in the man. The role of Karma properly understood is to discover the infinite source of this knowledge and power.

Freedom is the ultimate goal of life. From freedom the world comes, in bondage it rests and to freedom it returns in the end. Such is also the destiny of man. He is the Absolute Omnipotent Being—the Uncreate Atman but through ignorance thinks himself to be in bondage, limited by time, space and causation, and it is he again, who knowing the Truth transcends all the trappings of the Self and becomes free. No other theory in the whole world of human thought proclaims so eloquently the freedom of the Soul than the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation that is inextricably blended up with the theory of Karma. Man himself is the builder of his own destiny. The sum-total of all the works man has done, of the thoughts he has thought gives the direction to the human soul when the body dies. 'From body to body, to heaven and back again to earth it shall go on until it has finished its experience and completed the circle.' Attachment to the fruits of one's own action is the cause of one's bondage, for it is this desire for results that keeps the wheel of life in perpetual motion.

The balance of life—the perfect state of equilibrium—must therefore be attained to put a stop to this cycle of birth and death—the polarities of human existence, and this, the Scriptures say, can be consummated by self-abnegating devotion to works—works not motivated by any selfish desire for fruits. So declares the Bhagavad Gita :—

“ Whoso, his deeds in Brahman merged,
Works on, all thought of gain renounced,
As lotus-leaf left dry when dew
Rolls off,— is free from taint of sin.”
“ The man made Whole, all ‘ gain ’ forsworn,
Inherits Peace that naught can mar :
The soul un-whole, that dreams of ‘ gain ’,—
Its wish the bird-lime—traps itself.”
“ Hence, ever heart-detached within,
Do thou such work as needs be done :
Indeed, while working thus detached,
“ Man grows into the Whole of man.”

Our actions are therefore the ultimate sources of our bondage and of freedom. We ourselves can reach to the Freedom—to the state of perfect balance the loss of which brings in the creation with all its limiting adjuncts that human life is heir to. Let not therefore the law of Karma as understood by the Hindus be branded as ‘ a savage fancy leading to the enfeeblement of will and the degeneration of the national life. This, on the contrary, is the only theory that with the greatest degree of logical consistency provides infinite scope for every individual to mould his own destiny and to attain Freedom—the cherished goal of human aspiration. It is this theory of Karma that most emphatically repudiates the doctrine of fatalism or pre-ordination which is the outgrowth of a fanciful notion of the creation of the world by God out of nothing. The bigoted theologians of the West have put quite a wrong interpretation upon the Hindu theory of Karma and have led, besides others, many of the Indians to look at their own philosophy of life through the coloured goggles of Western conception. It is the forgetfulness of the fundamental verity of our religion that has robbed Indian life of all its vigorous urge for freedom and has proved to be the source of all the ills of our national organism. Needless to say, it is the proper understanding of the true spirit of Hinduism that shall nerve the Indians to lion’s courage and make them stand on their own feet with a grim determination to wring out freedom from the hands of Nature. The philosophic grandeur that surrounds the lofty crest of Hinduism is an undeniable proof of the greatness of Indian genius that far outshines the Western intellects in points of moral certitude and profundity of thought. The hypnotic

Spell of Western materialism has blinded our vision to the sterling worth of our philosophy and has created in most minds a moral apathy towards every form of healthy activity and the indigenous culture and thought. From the platform and the press the blind zealots of the Christian fold have for centuries been trying to disfigure the face of India, and her religion, the very vital sap of her life, has been made the target of persistent attack and ridicule. It is time that she must take up the challenge and prove to the world at large by her life and action that Hinduism with its philosophy of Karma and reincarnation and the doctrine of freedom of the soul is not a dying religion but a dynamic force destined to mould and govern the aspirations of humanity as it did in the past, and that it is the only religion that with its broad outlook and dominant note of universalism and toleration can furnish the basic ground for a fuller synthesis of human thought and action, and link into harmony all the conflicting aspirations and interests of the struggling races of the world.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND INDIAN RENAISSANCE

By R. Ramakrishnan, B. A.

'The very dust of India is holy to me ; the very air is to me holy. She is the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

In response to the call of universal law India suffered a degeneration from her ancient glory and only lately has begun her Renaissance—now birth. We need labour under no fears about India's ascending to her rightful place in the federation of the world or about her sons' legitimate participation in the Parliament of men. In the immutable working of Providence the contribution of India to the world's progress is to be a very significant one. She is the life-giver to the wearied souls of the West, and to her resort the many souls in search of God. India is the custodian of the spirit-life of the world. Hence it is that while politics, sociology, abstract science and the like command the attention of the Western minds, religion is nearest and dearest to the Indian heart. In India everything should be connected with religion or the ordinary Indian mind throws it always as unworthy. To enforce social duties, political obligations, to drive such other things into the heart of the Indians, one should remember that one has to do it only in the name of religion, in the name of truth, in the name of the supernatural. Devoid of the touch of religion nothing has

any fascination for the Indian mind. As the Swami points out some where : Go to the English or American labourer and ask him what he knows of religion and the answer will be disappointing. His religion stops with Sunday Church attendance and he goes to Church because his father did the same. His is not to question why ! On the other hand question him of politics and he gives you a lengthy account of Parliaments and Governments. He has digested the newspapers well. But it is all the other way about the Indian peasant. He can tell you much of God, Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, Reincarnation, etc., but of the politics of his country he is mostly ignorant. The very breath of India is religion, the very blood of her veins is philosophy. Naturally enough the Indian Renaissance must have religion as its broad base and background. The forerunners of this new movement were all fully imbued with the spirit of India's past religious glory.

For one thing, Swamiji has greater claim to be regarded as the apostle of Indian Renaissance. He was a sanyasin, a philosopher, a wanderer without home or family, a perfect Brahmacharin, and his message found a ready response in the religiously moulded hearts of our people. As elucidated before, India has ever recognised them as leaders who have sacrificed everything and realised Godhead.

Swamiji came into the world at a most opportune moment and at a most critical period in our history. India was blindly sinking into the mire of materialism, and modern civilisation had then a peculiar fascination for our young men. This process, if it would have gone on unchecked, would have stifled our existence and defaced our importance. But the saviour was bound to come and very near the second greatest city of the Empire was born the Paramahansa whose teachings disillusioned the hearts of many. Drawn by an irresistible force towards him, Swamiji's restless mind ate of the Bread of Life and he was filled. Swamiji then retired for solitary study and practical realisation to the Himalayas. He was fully conscious of his mission to the world.

Swamiji has done much to get the greatness of India recognised overseas and kindle international interest in our literature and philosophy. He vividly laid bare before the West the glory of Hinduism and the antiquity of our past, the majesty of our traditions and the splendour of our heritage. He showed them how India must be the light-giver unto the wearied world. He analysed the magnitude of the Vedantic religion, and echoed with authority his Master's voice,—'All religions are one.' Western interest and curiosity were kindled and many scholars dived deep into our sacred literature and found solution to the problems of life.

His love of country has been unmatched. India was to him the mother Kali and her welfare was ever his chief concern. All her sons and daughters were his own brothers and sisters. He had no party interest to further, nor had he to work for any one community or sect. The very dust of India was holy to him. He worked for the revival of her glorious past. He bid our sleeping men rise, wake up, and never to stop till the goal was reached. He never cared for results. Service was his one aim. The ignorant masses of the country found in him a champion. Serve these *Daridra Narayanas*—these poor Gods and you serve God,—this was the watch-word of his life. He organised a band of youthful and enthusiastic sanyasins for social service and the uplift of the masses, and his mission of selfless workers has been doing splendid social and educational work ever since. For the education of the masses he pleaded strong. He defined education as 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' If the poor millions of India cannot come to education, he said, education should go to them. Ignorance is at the root of misery. Our poverty, our political subjection, our lagging behind in the progress of nations—all these are because of this ignorance and to remove these Swamiji left no stone unturned.

The poor, the lowly, the oppressed—for all these the heart of Swamiji bled over and anon. With his sincere love for all and his far-sightedness Swamiji saw how India could never prosper as long as 'Touch-me-not-ism' remained her creed. He exhorted his countrymen to embrace the down-trodden with love and affection and to work for the shortening of the gulf that separated the higher and the depressed classes. He pleaded for love, light and harmony into the homes of the poor. Educate them and civilise them and the economic problem of India is solved—is his over-recurring word to his countrymen. He is the pioneer of the present-day agitation for the removal of untouchability.

Even as he realised the necessity for the solidarity of the Hindu community, this Patriot-Prophet did not overlook the necessity for Hindu-Muslim unity. He saw how India could prosper only when these two mighty communities would live together in concord. His vision of a united India was one that should have 'a Vedantic brain and an Islamic body.' He realised how *assimilation* has ever been the policy of India and understood clearly the contribution of Islam and of other civilisations to India's greatness. To effect this, he preached his Master's teaching—'All Religions are one,' and showed that the petty quarrels between religions were mere waste of energy. He also pointed out the catholicity and comprehensiveness of Hinduism under whose wide roof men of all creeds could take safe shelter. India has

never known religious persecution. A New York Daily wrote just after his immortal Chicago address, 'After hearing him, we think how foolish we are in sending our missionaries to that learned nation.' What a mighty change of outlook!

Swamiji was also a social reformer in the best and purest sense of the term. He stood for the uplift of our women and showed how half of India would be shut out if we neglected our women-folk. He distinguished between the Western and the Eastern ideal of woman—as *wife* in one case and as *mother* in the other. He cleared the misconception about the place of our women in society and showed how the Hindu house-wife's position is always the more enviable. Every woman was to him the Mother Incarnate. He was for giving them liberal education—not in mere imitation of the Western ideals but in the light of our ancient past. 'Remember', he told our women, 'you are the descendants of Sita, of Savitri, of Damayanthi and it is up to every one of you to live and do as these did. May you be the mothers of heroes. The future of India rests on you.' Amidst his band of faithful workers there were also many ladies from the West and East, of whom Miss Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita) is the best known.

To our young men also he had a message to deliver. He infused into them the spirit of broad outlook and of tolerance and patriotism. He created in them a passion for active service of humanity. He asked them to travel over foreign lands and assimilate all that was best in Western culture. Before his time there was a tendency to despise all that was Indian and the Swamiji gave a blow to this deep-gone disease. He told our young men: say with pride—I am an Indian. Say boldly and with strong conviction—every Indian is my brother. Sacrifice all for your dear mother. Live up, one and all of you, to the ideal of our epic heroes. Pray night and day to the Mother—make me a man. He also held before them the ideal of the Karma-yogin;—mere renouncing the world by running away from it won't do. 'I shall not enter Paradise' he said, 'even until one of these my brothers has to keep out of it.' He preached how Vedanta was practicable in daily life. He emphasised the divinity in man and showed how he was the controller of his own destinies. There is nothing that man cannot do. Fools are they who call us sinners.

The Swamiji's practical knowledge has been shown in other ways too. He realised that the East and the West were more complementary than contradictory and that the one would be incomplete without the other. There was no inseparable barrier between the East and the West. At the same time, he knew that each had got a separate mission to perform. Let the West sit at the feet of India—the mother of

religions and learn spirituality and in return teach to her how to attain material progress and economic prosperity. He bid Mother India awake from her long sleep and again assume her role of the light-bringer to the world.

Swamiji was also for encouraging Sanskrit study and Oriental research. Only by learning Sanskrit could we have a direct access to our literary and spiritual heritage. He emphasised the majesty and grandeur of the Upanishads and created in us a strong desire to dig up the neglected mines.

His whole life knew not a moment's rest. He sacrificed his health and life for the great cause. He was a veritable Titan and a Hercules at work. He contributed to journals, delivered lectures, undertook religious classes and personally attended to plague-stricken areas. He had the co-operation and help of princes and foreigners in this noble task. His personality and oratorical gifts attracted thousands to him. When he knew his mission was over this Hercules passed away. But the fire he kindled is kept unextinguished and unextinguishable and the flag he unfurled is flying afloat. His name and example are a treasure we have to bequeath to our future generations. In the name of this 'Hero' of ours, in the light of his guidance let us awake and bestir ourselves!

THE ASHRAMAS

(Continued from the last issue)

By Sir John Woodroffe

There are different kinds of Yatis or Paramahamsas. The Sādhana ordained differs according to the class which is (a) the lower (Mandādhikāri), (b) medium (Madhyamādhikāri) and (c) highest (Uttamādhikāri) competency.

In the case of those of the last class who have in varying degrees attained there is practically no Sādhana other than meditation on the Vedantic Truth, that is, the Real. In the case of those whose progress is somewhat short of this there is little else. Such do not go to the river nor do they do Japam of Mantra or Nyāsa. These ponder upon the meaning (Anusandhāna) of the Pranava. The highest class have obtained external (Dama) and internal (Shama) control and know the full meaning of the Vaidik mantras and meditate thereon as upon the saying "Tat Tvam Asi" ('That thou art') and on such mantras as "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman). (Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati) "The knower of Brahman is Brahman" and so forth. In the case however of the two lower classes there is

more and more ritualism and more in the lowest class than in the middle. In the second class certain details are dropped and for others a particular Sādhana is substituted such as the reading of specific Vaidik texts. In both there is worship of the Saguna Brahman though the ordinary external Pūjā of Devatās is not followed in the form presented for men in the world. Yatidharmanirnaya p. 170 citing Sannyāsa Upanishad says,—“Na vāhyadevatābhyarchanam kuryāt” and p. 171 says there is no Devatārchanam.

Mistaken notions as to the life of the Yati however sometimes prevail. The Vedantic Yati or Dandins here described are communities which live under a rule which is said to have been proscribed by the great Shankarāchārya. They are so called because they carry a staff (Danda). It may well be that in earlier times as indeed happens to some extent at the present day persons of the fourth Ashrama led an independent life upon a self-prescribed rule. But these Vedantic Yatis of Shankara's School live in Mathas which they leave only to bathe and worship at the sacred river and to beg their food. A definite rule of life is prescribed for this class which has not unlikely taken the place of the Buddhist monks who preceded them. Shankara with a view to combat Buddhist ideas prescribed a ritual and Sādhana of a definite Hindu and “Tāntrik” type. Even men of highly advanced type require some ritual and discipline (Karma and Sādhana) for as Satyānanda says in his commentary on the Upanishad : “If those who are fit for work (whose adhikāra is in work) cease from it then mental impurity actually increases.” Shankara says that the Sandhyā is necessary for the Yati in order that thereby he may practise investigation, that is, his mind may be reminded of and continually stimulated to enquire into the supreme end of life (Paramārthānusaṁdhānābhyāsa). As the Gītā says man until freed cannot by his nature cease from action. This action is however adapted to the stage of spiritual advance achieved. Thus the Vishnu-Dharmashāstrakāra says that the Sandhyā for Dandins is not the ordinary one but Dhyāna sandhyā : that is meditation (Dhyānātmaka) devoid of bodily trouble or exercise (Kāyakleshavivarjita). Sandhyā=sandhim, i.e., joiner not of “times” but of Jīvātmā and Paramātmā. The notion that the Vedantik Yati moves about as a superior person beyond all discipline and doing nothing is incorrect. In the daily worship (Ahnikā kṛtyā) Sandhyā is done.—(See Yatidharmanirnaya III 136 et seq.). Many nowadays in the East and West consider it a mark of the superior person that he follows no forms of worship or discipline. It is true that those who have achieved the Formless are beyond all forms, but the persons who so talk are not that. The “protestant” spirit is apt to overdo itself. It is not ritualism

which is to be avoided but mechanical unintelligent ritualism. Even the high Yati does not conceive himself as wholly beyond it. On the contrary Sādhanā is present even for the Paramahansa (paramahangsānām sādhanam uktavantaḥ.—Yatidharma III, 147. See Introduction to Mahānirvāna Tantra). Sandhyā is physically the junction of the times, morning, midday, evening. But Sandhyā is also Devatā and the Yati's Sandhyā is of a type conformable to his spiritual state. His is meditation (Anusandhāna) on the Supreme Brahman as being within the circle of the sun (Sūrya mandala). There is no restriction of place. To purify his Buddhi he meditates on Ishvara as the Pranava or Om (Sandhyāpranavamaya) which is the root of Veda. The Yati goes to the Ganges or other river, bathes, washes his loin cloth (Kaupīna), gives offering (Argha), to the Sun thrice with the Pranava or Gāyatrīmantra. As the Dandins wear no sacred thread the Upāsana is done by simply holding the hands up in the same position as if the thread were held thereby. The morning Sandhyā is facing east and the evening the north. He sips the water (āchamanam). He makes a tilaka (mark) of earth or sacrificial ashes on the body. This is in the form of three lines (Tripundra) on the forehead, arms, chest and belly. He does Prāṇāyāma or he recites the mantra "Pavitra iti."—(See Mahānirvāna Tantra). The body (Piṇḍa) is purified through Prāṇāyāma. "Whether pure or impure or whatever he be, he who remembers the lotus eyed Nārāyaṇa is inwardly and outwardly pure." There is then prayer to Gaṇeśa and meditation on Vishnu as moon-coloured, dressed in white with four arms. There is prayer to the ancient Vaidik Sarasvatī and salutation to the Gurus. "I salute Nārāyaṇa Shakti and Brahmā born of the lotus, Vashishtha, Parāshara, Vyāsa, Shuka, Gaudapādāchārya, Yogendra Govindāchārya and his disciple Shri Shangkarāchārya, the latter's disciple Padmapādāchārya, his disciple Hastinālalaka, the Varttikakāra Totaka and other Gurus." A number of mantras follow to the founder of Brahmanavidyā Sampradāya and the Vaṅgsha Rishis. Then the seat is purified (Asana-Shuddhi). Evil spirits are warned away (Bhūtāpasarana) with the mantras "Om Phat". There is salutation to Durgā, Sarasvatī, Lakshmi, and then follows Nyāsa, the peculiarity in the case of Yatis being that the Bija mantra used is Om with its constituents A, U, M. "Oh Earth (Prithivī), thou holdest all regions (Lokas) but thou art thyself held by Vishnu. Do thou purify this and sustain me thereby". Thus at the root of the left thumb 'Am namah' above, 'Um namah' at top 'Mam namah' and then over the whole 'Om namah'. Anganyāsa and Karanyāsa are each done. Both are forms of Shadanganyāsa; when the latter is done on the body it is called in short Anganyāsa, when

done with the hands only. Karanyāsa. Thus "Salutation to the thumb and Bhūh in the form of Agni to the first finger and Bhuvah in the form of Prajāpati; to the middle finger and Svah in the form of Sūrya ; to the fourth finger and Bhūh, Bhūyah, Svah in the form of Brahmā ; to the little finger in the form of consciousness (Jñānāt-maka) ; to the palm and back of the hands (Karatalaprisbha), and Truth (Satya)". The Nyāsa is thus adapted to the Vedantic meditation which carries the mind from the passing Earth, to the eternal changeless Truth through the mind region (Antariksha) ; heaven, the earth, antariksha, and heaven as one whole (samashti), to that Consciousness (jñāna) by which all those worlds are thought (created). Nyasa is done also on heart, head, crown-lock (Shikhā), breast (Kavacha), three eyes. These are the two physical eyes and the unseen eye of wisdom (Jñānachakshu) which is between them in the forehead. Then follows meditation (Dhyāna) on Vishnu brilliant as the rising sun in a lotus with his adornments of conchshell, discus, mace and lotus. The hand is placed in Ganges water and 108 Japa (mental recitations) of the Om mantra are done. Water is taken in the right hand. Japa is done twelve times and the head sprinkled thrice. Japa is then made of the mantras Yam, Vam, Ram. Water is sipped thrice and libation (Tarpana) is done with Ganges water thrice with the mantras: "Om all this is Atmā" "Om all this is Brahman", "Om all this is of a surety Brahman". "Om ātmaivedam sarvam; Om Brahmaivedam sarvam ; Om sarvam khalvidam Brahma. (It will be observed that all the mantras are chosen as appropriate for the Vedantic life of the Yati.) Again follows Prāṇāyāma Karanyāsa, Anganyāsa and meditation (Dhyāna). Then Nyāsas are again done with the Mantra Om. Thus Om is said thrice on the heart, Mūlādhāra, navel, forehead, and crown of head (Brahmrandhra).—(See A. Avalon's "Six Centres and the Serpent Power"). Instead of actual offering of flowers, lights and so forth to the Devatā as in ordinary gross worship these are imagined (Kalpanā) and offered to the Para Devatā with the mantras Om and the Bija mantras of the elements commencing with Ham (ether) and ending with Lam (earth) which are considered to be the flowers, incense, lights and so forth. The physical world, nectar and so forth, is thus offered to the Spirit (Atmā). Rishhyādi Nyāsa follows, that is, salutation is made to the Rishi of the Mantra and so forth. —(See Introduction to the Mahānirvana Tantra CIX; now published in the 3rd edition of Shakti and Shakta".) With salutation to the Guru the Yati then goes to his study or other business whatever it be.

The Yatis of the first class practise their Mantra with Chhandas (metre), Rishi and Devata, do Dhyāna of Saguna Devatā, worship

Nārāyaṇa with form. When by means of meditation which commences with attributes (Upādhi) all such attributes are excluded and meditation becomes realisation itself (Jñānasvarūpa), then there is liberation (Moksha.) But until then meditation must have some form of mental object. As they are not perfect in Shama and Dama ritualism is still prescribed. Gradually they rise out of this ritual through the middle to the highest class the Sādhana of which is practically Vedāntic meditation only. Before the study of Vedānta the teacher and disciple say : "Om may He (God) protect us both. May He grant to us both aid. May we both work with all our strength. May our study be with understanding. May there be no dissension between us." There should be no squabbling on the subject of Vedāntic discussion and raising of passion which is far from those who are truly on the path.

Sā hā nāvavatu, Om sa ha nau bhunaktu, saha vīryam karavāvahai, tejasvināvadhītamastu, mā vidvishāvahai.

Tejasvinau adhitam svārthaprakāśhakam. (Yatidharma III, 130). According to the evening duties (sayantanavidhi) the Yati should do six Prāṇāyāmas, Shadāṅgānyāsa, mental (Mānasa) Japa of Pranava.—(Yatidharmanirṇaya II, 430.) For Japa is either verbal (Vāchika) or murmured (Upāṅgshu) or mental (Mānasa). The last form in which no sound is heard is the highest. (See Introduction to the Mahā-nirvāṇa Tantra LI). The following verse is then said : "Earth dissolves in water, water in fire, fire in air, air in ether, ether in the unmanifest (Avyakta Prakṛiti) and the latter in Puruṣa beyond whom there is nought. I am Mādhava (Vishnu) sleeping on the snake worshipped by Devas. I am the Ātmā of all (Akhilātmā). I am Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Sachchidananda)." Having so thought the Yati then sleeps. This is the order of involution in Kundali Yoga (See Avalon's "Six Centres and the Serpent Power.")

The fourth Ashrama is that of the Bhikshu or mendicant. In the previous Ashrama it was possible to have a home and fixed abode. In this Ashrama man is homeless (Aniketa) and a wanderer (Paryataka), whose life is spent in the perfecting of himself and the instruction, by preaching, of others. He should avoid large capital towns (Rājadhāni) or if there he should take no part in their life just as he avoids Hell (Kumbhāpaka). He should beg his food if possible in the villages. Indeed he should avoid all assemblies of men as he would a cemetery (Shmashāna).—(Yatidharma III, 170 *et seq.* "Sabhāsthālam shmaśhānasthitam iva.") He must avoid being himself noticed and must not take pleasure in being honoured.—(ib. III, 160). He must give up every wordly thought (Prapañchavṛtti), and live without wife or house, without his crown lock (Shikhā), with his head shaved and

should be as regards sexual desire as though he were an eunuch (Kṛtva), as regards worldly things he should be as though blind, deaf and dumb. "Hridi sa snehabhāvena chedrakṣhet striyam ekadā koti dvayam brahmakalpam kumbhapāki na sangshayah."—(If a Yati take to his heart once only a woman with love he will go to the Kumbhīpāka Hell for two crores (20 millions) of Brahma Kalpa periods. Of this there is no doubt. In Yatidharma II, 215 *et seq.*, elsewhere III, 170, *et seq.*, it is said "A woman should be avoided as a serpent" (Striyam ahimiva tyajet) and gold like a venomous serpent. "He should give up love for those dear to him and dislike for those not dear to him and attain the eternal Brahman by Dhyanayoga." Thus he may seem to some to be mad (Unmatta), enchanted and held in thrall as he is by his inner vision. Because he is spoken of as Bhikshu he must not be thought of as an ordinary beggar seeking to get as much as he can by gift without self-exertion. He is beggar only in this sense that being without home, family, trade, profession and forbidden to be accompanied or to take the help and enjoined to be detached from all pursuits he must in order to live beg his daily meal. He is forbidden to touch money or any metal. He must not remain in anyone's house for any greater length of time than it takes to milk a cow. He should not go to or stay in houses which are physically filthy, nor where the people are morally bad, nor where there is sickness or lamentation. From these various influences proceed what are evil for him. So he should not go to the house of a prostitute (Ganikā), wine merchant, the inflictor of punishments (Dandika), a priest who does worship in others' houses for pay (Deva pūjaka or pūjari), unreligious infidel persons who have themselves no fixed belief but pretend to the beliefs of those with whom they consort (Pashandah sarvalinginah,—Amarakosha). He should go to the houses of persons free from blame (Anindya). That this is the ground of the injunction is shown by the fact that whilst the Yati is forbidden to take food even from a Shrotrīya (one versed in Veda) if he be lacking in faith and devotion, he may take it even from a Brātya or Mlechchha if these have such qualities. A Brātya is one without the sacraments (Sangskārahina) and a Mlechchha is a non-Hindu European and others. He must take what food whether it be good or bad other than wine or flesh which the householder gives him and must not eat off metals or carry a begging bowl (Bhikṣhā pātra). He must wander on foot and never ride or be carried. Usually a plantain leaf is used as a plate, but for a Yati stone utensils are considered good. But in the four months of the rains he should not wander because then there is the seed and its sprouting and small creeping creatures and his movements might cause harm to them.—(Yatidharmanirnaya II. 215.) For the same

reason he should strain the water he drinks through a cloth. It is better to eat food unbegged: that is, the Yati appears at the house door and says "Om Nārāyaṇa" on which the householder knows that a Yati has come and gives him his food. He must beg once only. He must not be sorrowful (*vishādi*) if he does not get food nor rejoice (*na harshayet*) if he gets it. He must take and eat only so much as is sufficient to maintain his life (*Prāṇayātrika mātṛah syat*). It is said that at the most food should be taken in such quantity as to leave $\frac{1}{4}$ th of stomach empty for the movement of the vital digestive "air" (*vāyu sancharana*) ; $\frac{1}{2}$ food and $\frac{1}{4}$ water. He must take food for himself only. Certain kinds of food are forbidden as being productive of passion or other evil, e.g., ghee (*ghrita*), sweets (*madhu*), oil, onion.

His head should be shaved (*munda*) and his nails cut. He should be either naked or wear an old loin cloth (*Kaupīna*). He should bathe thrice a day and carry a staff (*Danda*). It is commonly said that by the taking of a staff a man becomes Nārāyaṇa (*Vishnu*): *Dandagrahana matrena naro nārāyaṇo bhavet*.—(86th Chapter: *Brahmayai-vartta Purāṇa*, *Shrikrishna-janma-khanda*). At the same time it is recognised that it is not the external marks which make a man a Yati.—*Na lingam dharmakāraṇam*. Or as it is said in the West *cucullus non facit monachum*. He should not associate with others or have any habitation as in the Forest Ashrama for he must direct his mind to liberation only.—(*Yatidharma II*, 215 *et seq.* See *Bṛihaddharma Purāṇa*, *Ullasa Khanda 7 ch.*)

(To be concluded)

THE NYAYA SYSTEM

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

Dealing with the Nyaya system, Dr. Radhakrishnan says about it and the cognate Vaisesika system: "Applying the methods of logical enquiry and criticism, they endeavour to show that these do not warrant the conclusions which the Buddhist thinkers derived from them and that logic does not compel us to disperse the unity and pattern of life into its fleeting moments. They are interested mainly in averting the sceptical consequences of the Buddhist phenomenalism, which merged external reality in the ideas of mind. They seek to restore the traditional substances, the soul within and nature without but not on the basis of mere authority." These two systems discuss space, time, cause, matter, mind, knowledge and soul, and explore and reveal the mechanism of human knowledge. Both seek to prove a

probability of souls, a personal God, and an atomic universe. The Nyaya stresses logic while the Vaiseshika stresses the atomic constitution of the universe.

In the Nyaya system, analysis and dialectics occupy a prominent place. All knowledge implies the subject (*pramata*), the object (*prameya*), cognition (*pramiti*), and means of knowledge (*pramana*). It is one of the glories of Hindu thought that it has investigated the question of *pramanas* with the utmost care and precision. The Nyaya system discusses at length the fallacies of thought and shows the respective places of perception and inference and scripture and reveals the value and result of syllogisms. Its signal service was in the field of criticism of Buddhist thought. It points beyond the flux of sensations to the reality which is the permanent background of the sensations. "The Buddhist view that all universals are imagined, since specific individuals alone exist is rejected by the Naiyayikas, who hold that the universals are as real as the individuals in which they subsist by the relation of inherence (*Samavaya*)." The learned author deals in detail with the Nyaya exposition of the syllogism of which the five members are (1) *pratiigna* or the proposition (2) *hetu* or the reason (3) *utaharana*, or the explanatory example, (4) *upanaya* or the application, and (5) *nigamana* or the statement of conclusion. Professor Max Muller shows how Indian syllogism is indigenous and is not a borrowing from Greece. While the Nyaya says that there are four *pramanas* i.e., *pratyaksha* (perception), *anumana* (inference), *upamana* (comparison) and *śabda* (verbal knowledge), the Mimamsas add also *arthapathi* (presumption) and the Vedantins further add *anubhava* or *anupalabधि* (non-existence).

Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "The Nyaya, which is anxious to save us from Buddhist subjectivism, has not provided us with a more satisfactory view of reality." He says further: "The main assumptions which vitiate the epistemology of the Nyaya are: (1) that self and not-self are sharply separated from one another, (2) that consciousness is the result of the causal action of the not-self on the self, (3) that knowledge is a property of the self..... So long as the Nyaya gives an account of what is immediately experienced in the act of knowledge, it is on secure ground; but when it tries to offer a metaphysical explanation, in terms which take us behind the ultimate fact of knowledge, it is open to criticism." The real weakness of the Nyaya system is in its inability to comprehend and express a reality higher than the dichotomy of subject and object. The ultimate universal reality is *chaitanya*. Bradley says well: "That the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the

sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat, if it hides some colourless movement of atoms, some spectral wool of impalpable obstructions or unearthly ballot of bloodless categories." Further, in the Nyaya view the individual soul has got various qualities such as aversion, volition, pleasure, pain and cognition. The Nyaya has no doubt stated that the soul is different from the body and the senses and the mind; and it has declared the soul to be partless, immaterial and all-pervasive. But it has transferred to the soul many of the qualities and attributes of the mind. It postulates a plurality of souls. Nay, though it says that consciousness cannot exist apart from the self, it does not affirm that the soul itself is consciousness (Chit). Further, it defines Moksha as cessation of pain and not as the realisation of *Sachchidananda*. It is not a right view to urge that consciousness is a mere lightning glow resulting from the impact of two clouds, *viz.*, soul and matter. Sri Sankaracharya has subjected the Naya doctrine to a searching and scathing criticism in his *Bhashya* on the Vedanta Sutra (II,3,50 to 53). The Nyaya has no doubt emphasised the existence and glory of God but it has kept him apart from and above the souls and nature.

I have indicated above the main features of the Nyaya philosophy. It is not possible to go here more deeply into it. I may however point out here that it deals with sixteen topics *viz.*, Pramana (means of knowledge), Prameya (objects of knowledge), Samsaya (doubt), Prayojana (purpose), Drishtantha (illustration or instance), Siddhanta (demonstrated truth), Avayava (promises) Tarka (ratiocination), Nirnaya (conclusion), Vada (argumentation), Jalpa (sophistical reasoning), Vitanda (wrangling), Hetvavhasa (logical fallacy), Chchala (quibbling), Jati (false analogy), and Nigrahasthana (unfitness for arguing). The Sutra runs thus:

प्रमाण प्रमेय संशय प्रयोजन दृष्टान्त सिद्धान्तावयव तर्क निर्णय वाद जल्प वितंडा
हेत्वाभास च्छल जाति निग्रहस्थानानां तत्त्वज्ञानान्निःश्रेयसाधिगमः ॥

Gautama promises that by knowing the above things wrong knowledge will go; with it desires will disappear; with them karmas will vanish; with these births will cease; and with the cessation of births there will be cessation of pain. The Sutra runs thus:

दुःख जन्म प्रवृत्ति दोष मिथ्या शानानामुत्तरोत्तरगपाये तदनन्तराभावादपवर्गः ।

Thus the Nyaya recaptured for the human mind from the nihilistic chaos of Buddhist philosophy, the individual soul, God, and the universe. But it failed to purgate from its description of the soul various qualities which really belong to the mind. It made God only the *Nimitta Karana* or the efficient cause (*causa efficiens*) of the universe and not also the material cause of the universe, atoms (anus) being that material cause. It says that *adrishta* bring spirit and matter together. Thus this function was not assigned to God, God was thus made an external

and extracosmic power who had nothing to do with the universe after its creation. The Nyaya did not affirm the immanence of God along with His transcendence. The atomic theory of the universe, though it is a great step forward, does not really take us far, and was superseded by the Vedantic theory of the universe. Further, as pointed out above, the bliss of beatitude, as expounded by the Nyaya, is of a negative character and is stated to be attainable by the removal of false knowledge (*Mithya jnana*). The word used for it is *Apavarga* and expresses the liberation aspect rather than the *Chaitanya* of the *Ananda* aspect of the beatitude. It is in these important respects that the Vedanta philosophy established itself firmly in the Indian heart as the *ne plus ultra* of spiritual truth.

SELECTIONS FROM THE ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

BALAKANDA : CHAPTER II

BRAHMA'S PRAYER—THE GLORY OF BHAKTI

नतोऽस्मि ते पदं देव प्राणबुद्धीन्द्रियात्मभिः ॥
यच्चिंत्यते कर्मपाशाददि नित्यं मुमुक्षुभिः ॥ १४ ॥

14. With my Prana (vital air), Buddhi (intellect), senses and mind I bow down, Oh Lord, to Thine feet which souls desiring liberation always meditate upon in their hearts to get rid of the bondage of actions.

मायया गुणमय्या त्वं सृजस्यवगिलुपयि ॥
जगत्तेन न ते लेप आनन्दानुभवत्मानः ॥ १५ ॥

15. Through Thine Maya (inscrutable power) consisting of the Gunas¹ Thou createst supportest and destroyest the universe and yet Thou being the (Supreme) Atman immersed in Thine own blissful Self remainest untainted.

[1. The Satwa, Rajas and Tamas—the constituent elements of Maya.]

तयाशुद्धिर्न दुष्टानां दानाभ्ययनकर्मभिः
शुद्धात्मता ते यशसि सदा भक्तिमता यया ॥ १६ ॥

16. People of impure mind cannot, with all their charity, scriptural study and performance of actions, attain, Oh the Immaculate Atman, to the same purity as the constant devotees to Thine glory do.

अतस्तवाग्निर्भेदश्चित्तदोषापनुत्तये ॥
सद्योऽतर्हृदये नित्यं मुनिभिः सात्वतवृत्तः ॥ १७ ॥

17. Therefore may the sight to-day of Thine feet which are ever worshipped by devout saints in their inmost heart, remove the impurity from my heart.

ब्रह्मादिः स्वार्थसिद्ध्ययमस्माभिः पूर्वसेवितः ॥

अपरोक्षानुभूत्यर्थं ज्ञानिभिः हृदि भावितः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Formerly Thine feet were adored by us including myself and others for the fulfilment of our desires and these (very) feet are meditated upon by the Jnanis in their heart for the realization of their self.

तवाङ्घ्रिपूजानीमाल्यतुलसीमालया विभो ॥

स्पन्दते वक्षसि पदं लब्ध्वापि श्रीः सपत्नित् ॥ १९ ॥

19. Oh Omnipresent Lord! Though Lakshmi (the Goddess of fortune) has her abode in Thine breast, yet like a co-wife she is jealous of the Tulsi garland offered at Thine feet.

अतस्त्वत्पादभक्तेषु तव भक्तिः श्रियोधिका ॥

भक्तिमेवाभिवाञ्छन्ति त्वद्भक्ताः सारवेदिनः ॥ २० ॥

20. Hence, because Thy love for the worshippers of Thine feet is greater than that for Sri (Lakshmi), Thine devotees who have understood this truth rightly aspire after Bhakti (devotion) only.

अतस्त्वत्पादकमले भक्तिरेव सदाऽस्तुमे ॥

संसारामयतप्तानां मेपजं भक्तिरेवते ॥ २१ ॥

21. Therefore Bhakti (devotion) alone being the remedy for those who are afflicted in the world, let me ever have devotion at Thine lotus feet.

CHAPTER III

KAUSALYA'S GLORIFICATION OF HER SON SRI RAMA JUST AFTER HIS BIRTH

देवदेव नमस्तेऽस्तु शंखचक्रगदाधर ॥

परमात्माऽन्युतोऽनंतः पूर्णस्त्वं पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ २० ॥

20. Salutations unto Thee, Oh God of gods, who art equipped with conch, discus and mace. Thou art the supreme Self, indestructible, infinite, perfect and the Supreme Purusha.

वदत्यगोचरं वाचां बुद्ध्यादीनामतीन्द्रियं ॥

त्वावेदवादिनः सत्तामात्रं ज्ञानैकविग्रहं ॥ २१ ॥

21. Thou art beyond speech, beyond the comprehension of intellect and other senses, pure existence and embodiment of consciousness alone,—so say those well-versed in the Vedas.

त्वमेव मायया विश्वं सजस्यवसि हंसिच ॥

सत्त्वादिगुणसंयुक्तस्तुर्थ एवामलः सदा ॥ २२ ॥

22. Thou, through (Thy) Maya (inscrutable power) createst, maintainest and destroyest the universe. Thou art endowed with Gunas such as Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas and art verily the Super-conscious state¹ and hence ever untainted (by Maya)

[(1) i.e. The transcendental state beyond the three ordinary states of wakefulness, dream and sound sleep]

करोषीव न कर्तात्वं गच्छसीव न गच्छसि ॥

न शृणोषि शृणोषीव पश्यसीव न पश्यसि ॥ २३ ॥

23. Thou actest not, yet Thou appearest to act ; Thou walkest not, yet Thou appearest to move ; Thou hearest not, yet Thou appearest to hear ; Thou seest not, yet Thou appearest to see.

अप्राणोद्यमनाः शुद्ध इत्यादि श्रुतिब्रवीत् ॥

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्नपि न लक्ष्यसे ॥ २४ ॥

अज्ञानध्वांतचित्तानां व्यक्त एव सुमेधसां

जठरे तव दृश्यंते ब्रह्मांडाः परमाणवः ॥ २५ ॥

24-25. The Vedas declare Thee to be beyond the Pranas (Vital energy) and the mind, the (ever) Pure. Though Thou art uniformly existing in all beings, Thou art not perceived by men whose mind is shrouded with the darkness of ignorance, but art visible to the wise. All the worlds appear as so many atoms in Thee.

त्वं ममोदरसंभूत इति लोकान्विडंयसे ॥

भक्तेषु पारवश्यं ते दृष्टं मेऽद्यघृत्तम ॥ २६ ॥

(Such a being as) Thou art born in my womb: thus Thou deceiveth the people. So to-day, Oh the chief of the Raghus, do I realise Thy subserviency to Thy devotees.

संसारसागरे मग्ना पतिपुत्रधनादिषु ॥

भ्रमामि माययातेऽद्य पादमूलमुपागता ॥ २७ ॥

27. Though plunged in the ocean of Samsara (worldly life) and attached to the husband, children, property, etc., and tossed about by Thy Maya, I have attained to Thy feet this day.

देवत्वद्रूपमेतन्मे सदातिष्ठतु मानसे ॥

अवृणोतु न मां माया तव विश्वविमोहिनी ॥ २८ ॥

28. May this form of Thine, Oh Lord, ever remain (fixed) in my heart and may Thy maya which deludes the whole universe not enshroud me.

उपसंहर विश्वात्मन्नदो रूपमलौकिकं ॥

दर्शयस्व महानंदबालभावं सुकोमलं ॥

ललितालिगनालापै स्तरिध्याम्युक्तदतमः ॥ २९ ॥

29. Retract this supernatural form of Thine, Oh the Universal Atman, and show Thy tendermost child form instead, Oh the Supreme Bliss ! so that by the sweet embraces and talks I may cross the dire darkness (of ignorance).

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY'S DEFENCE OF INDIA

Ever since western nations came into contact with India she has been a favourite theme for many a European author who desires to produce startling books concerning the 'barbarous customs' and 'pagan worship' prevailing in the East. A few decades ago it was Christian missionaries who used to carry on this libellous propaganda in foreign lands ; for they found in it the best means for enlisting the sympathies of Christian Europe in their evangelical activities in India. But of late a different type of writers have taken up the cudgel and of these Miss Mayo, a cold weather tourist, has made herself most notorious by her performance in her two well-known books "Mother India" and "The Slaves of Gods." Christian missionaries have however changed their former tactic of wholesale condemnation either because they have found it inexpedient or because they have realised its unfairness. And at the present day when Miss Mayo and her supporters are relentlessly attacking India by their scurrilous writings, many prominent Christian missionaries are found taking up the cause of India and contradicting the exaggerated half-truths and lies circulated by these libellous writers. As an instance we give below an extract from a strong letter of protest from Mr. John Meckenzie, a member of the Scottish Mission and Principal of the Wilson College, Bombay, addressed to the Editor of "The British Weekly" which recently published an article by 'Lorna' justifying the attitude of Miss Mayo and her supporters.

"I feel particularly that the position which has been taken up by the great majority of Indian missionaries should be explained with a little more clearness than has yet been done to the supporters of missionary work in Great Britain.....In the first place, would it not be a very extraordinary thing if, after our long connection with India through trade and Government and missionary work, we were dependent for the last word or truth regarding India on the writings of a cold weather visitor?.....'Lorna' says, on what authority I do not know, that "Mother India" has stood the test of fiercest and most relentless criticism. This is not an accurate statement. There are throughout the book statements, well documented, which show that in the particular places with which the authorities are familiar certain kinds of barbarous customs and practices are prevalent. Whenever Miss Mayo begins to generalise she goes completely astray. For example, I have talked with European doctors working in different parts of India who have told me that this and that practice described in the book has never come under their notice. India is a very large country. The man with the muck-rake has a large field of work and if he works assiduously he can gather an imposing heap.

"It is not difficult to illustrate the fallacy which Miss Mayo has committed. Indian writers have been quick to detect it, and some of

the answers which have been written have largely taken the form of a "tu quoque". One writer, for example, has put together a considerable amount of material, as full documented as any of Miss Mayo's, in which some terrible features of modern American life are exposed. On the basis of it as strong an indictment of American life can be framed as Miss Mayo has framed on the life of India. But the whole procedure is futile. Imagine an Oriental coming to Europe, which in point of population is comparable with India, and travelling over the length and breadth of it, from Moscow to Madrid, and from London to Constantinople, in search of moral and physical filth; and imagine him dishing up the results of his investigations as the truth about Europe. It would be no more monstrous a piece of work than Miss Mayo has given us on India.

"Having said all this, I wish to make it clear that I do not deny that there is in India an enormous amount of poverty and ignorance and disease and general ill-health, more perhaps than in any other land in the world.....Regarding them I wish to say three things and in saying them I believe I represent the mind of a great many missionaries.

"Firstly the evils that afflict India can only be removed through the self-sacrificing service of those who have it in their power to help. No facile, heartless journalism will move them one inch. I have not yet been able to discover what Miss Mayo proposes to do about them. Her manifest unfairness has embittered the minds of some of the finest people in India, while the people who are responsible for the abuses which she condemns have, most of them, not yet heard that there is such a person as Miss Mayo.

"Secondly, you can never serve a people to any purpose unless you respect them. Indian readers of Miss Mayo feel that she had insulted them as a people, that she has treated them as a race of vermin. It is this that has rankled more than anything else. It was this chiefly, I believe, that determined the executive committee of the National Christian Council to protest against her first book.....If India is to be raised it must be through service, and through the service of men and women who regard the most unfortunate and the most degraded as their brothers and sisters.

"Thirdly, there is in India a great and growing band of men and women who in a multitude of ways are seeking to raise their motherland. There are earnest social reformers who, working quietly and unobtrusively, are yet deeply influencing the whole life of India. Miss Mayo does not seem to have heard much of them. There are many of them who are seeking for firmer foundations for their schemes of social reform.....These people feel that Miss Mayo has stabbed them in the back....."

This trenchant criticism of Mr. Mackenzie on behalf of the Christian missionaries in this country reflects also the Indian opinion to a large extent about the activities of these foreign calumniators. All liberal-minded Indians now-a-days admit that in the present-day Hindu society there are many evils which are largely the result of the stagnation that the society suffered during national calamities in the shape of many foreign conquests and rule that India was subjected to for the past so many centuries. But we maintain that such evils are not due to any defect in the religious conceptions of India or any inferiority in the standard of Indian morals. They are largely the result of the sense of exclusiveness, narrowness and conservatism which the Hindu society as a whole developed in the course of that

shrinking of communal consciousness which it experienced as a natural reaction to the threatening influence of alien rule and alien ideas. Indians themselves are now quite aware of the failings of their society and many organisations, exclusively Indian, are at present actively engaged in remedying them. We do not in any way refuse to accept the help of friendly foreigners, but we can assure Miss Mayo and persons of her ilk, as our missionary friend has done, that if their objective is to uplift India, the sort of mendacious propaganda that they are conducting against her in the West, vilifying her people and her ideals, is not the best means of accomplishing it; for the only result of this false representation of 'India' will be to lower her prestige in the eyes of foreign nations and also to wound the feelings of Indians themselves in such a way as to shake their confidence in the sympathy and good will of westerners in general. If any body of foreigners want to do real service to India, let them come out into this country in the spirit of such illustrious westerners as Sister Nivodita, C. F. Andrews, Mrs. Annie Besant, etc., as humble students of the ancient culture of this land, and having imbibed the spirit of it let them inculcate the same into the Indian masses along with the best of western ideals that are suited to the genius of the Indian nation. Service rendered in such a way and in such a spirit will result in real benefit to India and call forth the lasting gratitude of this nation.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Philosophy of Union by Devotion : by Swami Nityapadananda Abadhut ; published by Pramatheswar Lahiri, M. A., Mahanirban Math, Klighat, Calcuttta ; Pages 192 ; price Re. 1-8-0.

The book is an English translation of Abadhut Jnanananda Deva's Bhakti-yoga Darsana in Bengali. It gives, as the title indicates, a detailed account of the nature of devotion, of its various aspects, of the means of acquiring it, etc. The opinions expressed in the book are supported by frequent quotations from standard Bhakti scriptures like Narada Bhakti Sutras, Shandilya Bhakti Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, etc. While it speaks of all aspects of Bhakti, the peculiar form of devotion that the Gopis of Brindavan had for Sri Krishna is specially expounded in a few illuminating chapters wherein the sublimity and mystic beauty of that form of devotion are very successfully depicted by the author. One of the most commendable features of the book is that though it treats of Bhakti and therefore advocates the worship of God as a personality, it has no quarrel with the Gnanins who are devoted to the impersonal aspect of God-head. In fact the author regards the realisation of the identity of the individual with the universal Self as the goal of spiritual life while he prescribes Bhakti as the easiest means of attaining it. To him there is no distinction between a real Gnanin and a real Bhakta. This universal and non-sectarian note so remarkably presented through every page of the book is in itself a sufficient indication that the book is the out-come of the mature insight and reflection of a great soul. Besides, while it is full of tender emotionalism of the Bhakta, it is in no way lacking in erudition

and logical consistency. This combination of fervency, scholarship, cogency and non-sectarianism entitles the book to a high place in Bhakti literature. A close study of it will benefit all spiritual aspirants. The style of translation is simple and forceful. The get-up is neat and handy.

First Steps on the Path: by Geoffrey Hodson; Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras; 132 pages.

This book is a collection of the author's talks to a group of fellow-students who met for study, meditation and self-training. It is divided into three parts: the first on 'Meditation' gives many useful and practical hints on the topic; the second under the title 'The Path' deals with purity of life and other moral virtues that an aspirant has to cultivate; and the last section on 'The Message' gives the usual ideas of the Theosophists regarding the *Madhya*. The book is neatly got up and is written in simple and forcible English. It will be found useful by persons who are interested in the doctrines of the Theosophists.

The other side of Death by the Rt. Rev. C. W. Leadbeater; published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

This book, as the title indicates, is an attempt at exploring the mysteries of death and of the life of the soul in the spirit worlds. The phenomenon of death is analysed from the psychological point of view, and innumerable pieces of evidence derived from observation, inference and practical experience are given in proof of the continued existence of the spirit after death. A chapter on clairvoyance and the methods of developing it is given, and the author who professes himself to have practised the methods and attained success in them gives, from personal experience, innumerable facts about after-death life, about the progress of the soul in the spirit worlds, about the phenomena of apparitions and many other things of similar nature. A section is devoted to a consideration of spiritualism and psychical research. The book, containing over 317 pages, will provide a very interesting and instructive reading for those who are interested in astral life and psychic phenomena.

Bodhi Dharma: by T. L. Vaswani; published by Genesh & Co., 39, Thambu Chetty Street, Madras; price annas 12.

This booklet contains some illuminating reflections of T. L. Vaswani on Lord Buddha and his Message. The author has given also a valuable introduction wherein a brief interpretation of the Buddha's teachings is attempted.

The Vision of Life: by A. H. Jirjigani; published by Ganesh & Co., Madras.

The book is written in the form of an allegory in which life is compared to a lady residing in a mansion and the soul to an occasional visitor to the place. The author describes the various aspects of life as fine halls in the mansion—the Hall of Beauty, the Hall of Joy, the Hall of Misery, the Hall of Virtue, the Hall of Sin and the Hall of Creation. In the second half of the book the author puts forth his views regarding salvation and perpetual rest for the soul. He wonders 'how a sensible man can wish for himself a life of eternal rest which would be no better than death' and thinks that an eternity of rest will be 'eternally tiresome'. According to him creation or work and love of life are the only things conducive to happiness.

We fail to understand the full significance of these points as the author has not explained them fully. But we feel that the idea behind his mind is the modern idea of activism which considers life, and a state of eternal peace and calm as incompatible. This is due to the mistaken conception that the whole of life consists in the senses. By becoming one with the substratum of which life is a mere shadow or a manifestation we are not surely entering into a state of tedious rest. Though we differ from the author in some of the fundamental points he is driving at, we have no hesitation to say that the book is charming and suggestive.

Women in Hindu Law : by K. T. Bhashyam Aiyangar ; published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras ; pages 48.

Mr. Bhashyam Aiyangar gives in a nut-shell the history of the position of women in Hindu Law and society from the Vedic times up to the present day. He shows that in Vedic times women were the equals of men in every respect, and he traces the steps by which their position was lowered during the age of the Sūtras. He notices a revival of women's rights at the hands of Mediaeval Hindu law-givers ; but the administration of Hindu Law and its interpretation by European judges in the light of the law books of the Sūtra period checked the growth of this progressive movement. The book is full of quotations from authoritative sources and is written in a clear and convincing manner. A perusal of it will be helpful to all students of Hindu Law.

Satyagraha in Champaran : by Babu Rajendra Prasad ; published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. Price Rs. 2-8 ; pages 281.

This is an English translation of the author's original book in Hindi. It gives a very vivid account of the long struggle that the ryots of Champarn had to carry on with the European indigo planters who had managed to reduce them into a hopeless state of economic thralldom for over a century. With elaborate and interesting details the author narrates how the peasants tried for a long time to get their grievances redressed by sending petitions to the Government, how the Government often viewed those with indifference and apathy, how the ryots were in course of time driven to commit murders, incendiarism and even to break the peace and how the Government at such times came to the rescue of the planters by ruthlessly putting down the peasants instead of removing the root causes of such disturbances. It also gives an account of the last phase of the struggle in 1917 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The agitation was carried on so intelligently and peacefully under Mahatmaji's guidance that the Government was forced to institute an elaborate enquiry which resulted in a legislation redressing at least a part of the tenants' grievances. A perusal of the book will give one an idea of the hopeless state of subjection in which Indian peasantry is ordinarily labouring, and will impress one with the thought that unless their conditions are ameliorated Indian national life will not be placed on secure foundations.

Vivekananda, the Nation Builder : by Swami Ayyaknanda, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bankipore, Patna ; pages 139 ; price, Rs. 1.

The life and works of Swami Vivekananda have received wide publicity all through the world, and as far as India is concerned they have already received their due recognition as a great national

treasure. But as yet very few attempts have been made to make a systematic collection and study of Swamiji's opinions regarding the great problems of life that lie scattered through the pages of his voluminous works. Swami Avyaktanada has attempted this work in the present book as far as Indian national reconstruction is concerned.

The key-note of Swamiji's plan is spirituality. He held that it is the dominant note in the music of India's national life and that an effective solution of the problems of India can be accomplished only by intensifying her spiritual life. He always warned his countrymen against the blind imitation of Westerners, for the aims and ideals of Western society are different from those of India and a blind imitation therefore may cause death to India's nationality. These as well as Swamiji's views on social questions like Varnashrama, untouchability, Brahmin and the non-Brahmin problem, food question, etc., are presented in clear and lucid language. In the section on "The Spiritual Basis" the author deals with Swamiji's spiritual message as far as it touches Indian nationalism and shows how he reconciles the conflicting religions and philosophies of India and spiritualises social and political activities by his new conception of man and India. We must however add in this connection that we do not find in Swamiji's works any such elaborate scheme of political reconstruction as the author has designed in the chapter under that heading.

Nevertheless the book is on the whole a true exposition of Swamiji's views. It reveals the genius of India's social life in its true perspective and will act as a panacea for the rage for westernisation which still lingers in the minds of some sections of our countrymen. It gives the right direction in which our society ought to move for healthy progress. We wish the book a wide circulation in those days of national awakening in India.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Sixty-eighth Birthday of Swami Vivekananda comes off on the 21st of January, 1930. The Anniversary will be celebrated at the Sri Rukminakrishna Math, Broadie's Road, Mylapore, Madras on Sunday the 26th January.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA'S WORK IN AMERICA

Swami Paramananda's work in America has taken another forward step. Those who follow with devout satisfaction the widening influence of Sri Ramakrishna's message to the world cannot but review the Swami's growing achievement with deepest appreciation. In 1908 he established the Vedanta Centre of Boston; in 1914 it was installed in large and imposing headquarters on one of the loveliest parkways of the city. In 1920 extensive additions were made to this spacious house. In 1923 further expansion carried the Swami across the continent to found an Ashrama in the milder climate of Southern California near Los Angeles. He procured 140 acres of richly planted land. On this he has erected gradually a Temple of the Universal Spirit, a large Library, living quarters and book-room, all joined by arched cloisters; two large dwelling-houses, 14 cabins, a cottage, two garages and two

barns. In this mountain retreat lying in a crescent of hills belonging to the Sierra Madre range live twenty-five or thirty zealous devotees under the Swami's guidance.

Drawn by the power of the teaching and the rare beauty of the place, the public has invaded more and more the quiet of the Ashrama. To safeguard its character as a retreat the Swami has acquired now a town house in one of the finest residential sections of Los Angeles. Lovely gardens and handsome residences surround it on every side.

This new home will be dedicated by the Swami in December when he returns from Boston. Many of the public activities of the Ashrama will be transferred there. The Los Angeles Branch Library which has occupied rooms in a shabby building down town for several years will be moved to the new quarters. The Pasadena Branch Library will continue as it is. Its large attractive studio offers a perfect background for the weekly class held there and for the sale of Vedanta literature and Ashrama Arts and Crafts.

The work at the Boston Vedanta Centre is growing daily more fervent and vital. Its Temple of the Universal Spirit counts a numerous congregation every Sunday and Tuesday.

It requires tireless energy on Swami Paramahansa's part to carry forward four Centres at such distant points. Nothing could testify more eloquently to his endurance than the fact that during the past year he made the four-day journey across the continent fourteen times.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA AT THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA SAMAJ, VELLORE

A few old students of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras and other admirers of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna feeling the need of popularising the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna for a proper understanding of the spirit of Hinduism and promotion of their spiritual life formed themselves into an association by name 'Sri Ramakrishna Samajam, Vellore'. Mr. A. V. Gangadhara Bastrian, B.A., B.L., an ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna was elected President of the Samajam. The organisers invited Swami Yatiswarananda, Head of the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, to go over to Vellore to open the Samajam. The Swami accompanied by Mr. Anandurai, M.A., B.L. of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, reached Vellore on the 15th November last. On arrival, they were received and conducted to the residence of Mr. A. V. Gangadhara Bastrian. Friday night and Saturday were spent by the Swami in giving interviews to the eager devotees that sought him. The pleasant function of opening the Samajam was fixed at 9 A.M. on Sunday the 17th November in the Venkata Vedanta Ashrama, Nallampet, Vellore. The spacious hall of the Ashram was fully packed and the function commenced with prayer and worship of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna. Then the Swami in a short speech said that it was an auspicious day to have an association in Vellore to spread the ideas and ideals of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna and declared the Samajam open. The Swami then delivered an inspiring address on the Ideals of Sri Ramakrishna Mission. In the course of the lecture he touched upon the supreme devotion of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna and his realisation and the ardent piety and spirituality of Swami Vivekananda and illustrated his speech by narrating a number of incidents from the life of Baghavan Sri Ramakrishna to the great edification of the audience. During the stay of the Swami at Vellore he delivered two more

lectures, one at the Town Hall on 'Hinduism and its Message' and another at the local High School for the benefit of the students.

The presence of Mr. Appadurai was also availed of by the public of Vellore to hear a Lantern Lecture from him on 'A New Experiment in Education' in the course of which the lecturer ably pointed out the aims and ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home and Residential School and gave a correct idea of the daily life of the students in the Home and its spiritual background.

Swami Yatiswarananda and Mr. Appadurai reached Madras on the 18th after visiting the American Mission Hospital and Medical School.

ACTIVITIES OF THE R. K. MATH, MADRAS IN ANDHRA DESA

Swami Ghanananda of the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras went to Andhra Desa in July and August last on two short tours with the object of raising donations in aid of the Telugu Section of the Publication Department of the Math. He visited Guntur, Tenali, Repalle, Nellore and other places in Guntur and Nellore districts, and also the towns of Bozwada and Ellore.

Besides explaining to a large number of devotees, friends and sympathisers the ideals and aims of Vedanta in all these places, he gave a discourse on Education and Illumination on the 30th August at Muthukur and delivered a public lecture on the objects and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission on the 7th September, at the Y. M. H. A. at Ellore. He was also requested to preside over a meeting at the Nellore Progressive Union on the 31st August, at which Mr. S. Venkatesaiah of the V. R. High School at Nellore spoke on Sri Ramakrishna and Bhakti Yoga.

The Swami received donations from many of those interested in the activities of the Ramakrishna Math at Madras. The latter takes this opportunity to express its thanks to them as well as to one and all of those who helped the Swami in various ways.

The Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, acknowledges with thanks the following donation towards the Telugu Sections of its Publication Department:

1.	Mr. C. Malkondayyah,	Advocate,	Nellore,	Rs. 100
2.	" B. Ramaswamiyyah,	do	do	" 50
3.	" D. Sasragiri Rao,		do	" 25
4.	" A. Hanumiah, Swadeshi Khadi Stores,		Guntur,	" 25
5.	" M. Ramamurthi Pantulu, Andhra Traders Ltd.,		"	" 15
6.	" G. Ranganaichalu & Mr. G. Kotiah Chowdry,	Vakils		" 15
7.	" K. Sitaramaiah Pantulu,	Vakil,	Tenali	" 15
8.	" P. Veeraraghayalu Pantulu	do	do	" 15
9.	" M. Yelliah Sreshthy		do	" 15
10.	" K. Anjanayulu,	Landlord,	do	" 10
11.	" M. Kotiswara Rao Naidu, Tahasildar		do	" 10
12.	" K. Raghuveiah Pantulu, Ry. Contractor,		do	" 10
13.	" V. Sivasubba Rao Pantulu Dy. Collector,		do	" 10
14.	" K. Sriramulu Pantulu	Vakil,	do	" 10
15.	" G. Subba Rao,	Pleader	Guntur.	" 10
16.	" S. Veerabhadraiah, Merchant,		Tenali,	" 10
17.	" G. Venkatasubba Rao Pantulu, Arundelpet,		Guntur,	" 10
18.	" R. Anjanayulu,		do	" 5
19.	" N. Balakotiswara Rao,		do	" 5
				Rs. 365

Brought forward			Rs. 365
20.	Mr. V. Bharanacharlu,	Guntur,	5
21.	" R. Bhaskara Rao, Merchant.	do	5
22.	" Maddi Rangiah	do	5
23.	" P. Lakshminarayana Rao,	Tenali,	5
24.	" V. Lingiah Chowdry	do	5
25.	" M. Nageswara Rao.	Guntur,	5
26.	" S. Nagabhushanam, Yarn Merchant	Tenali,	5
27.	" S. Raghaviah Chowdry, Contractor,	do	5
28.	" P. Ramakrishna,	Guntur,	5
29.	" Ranga Rao Pantulu,	do	5
30.	" P. Satyanarayana,	Repalli,	5
31.	" A. Sitapathi Rao, Advocate,	Guntur,	5
32.	" Ch. Subba Rao Pantulu, Sub-Magistrate,	Tenali,	5
33.	" Y. V. Subba Rao, Dt. Court Munsiff,	Repalli,	5
34.	" V. R. Veerabhadriah,	Chinnaravur,	5
35.	" P. Narasingha Rao Naidu,	Rangoon,	5
Collections below rupees five			120

Total Rs. 565

KUMBHA MELA : APPEAL OF THE R. K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA,
AT ALLAHABAD

Kumbha Mela is one of the greatest religious festivals of India attracting thousands of Sadhus and pilgrims from all parts of the country. Owing to over-crowding and inadequate sanitary arrangements epidemics often break out on such occasions and the condition of pilgrims coming from distant parts would indeed be very precarious if they do not get proper medical attendance in their illness. The branch of the Ramakrishna Mission at Allahabad therefore proposes to make special arrangements for rendering medical aid on this occasion and invites the cordial sympathy and financial support of the generous public. The appeal of the Secretary, R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Allahabad is given below :—

DEAR SIR
MADAM,

I presume you are already aware of the nature of work which the local Ramkrishna Mission has undertaken from 1910 to do in this sacred and ancient city of Prayag where during the month of Magh (January and February) there is an influx of pilgrims bringing in their train misery and sickness. Especially this is the year of 'Purna Kumbha', commencing from 13th January, 1930, and lasting for about one month and a half. The U. P. Government expects about thirty lakhs of pilgrims on the sacred occasion. We will hold our camp on the Triyoni bank and will do our relief works there as well as here in our permanent Dispensary at Muthiganj. Our already slender resources are unable to cope with the demand and we shall fail to do our duty, if we do not bring the matter to the notice of the public for timely help. It is needless to add that any help, however small, will be of incalculable use for this noble purpose and will be gratefully received by the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,
SWAMI BIGNANANANDA,

Honorary Secretary,
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA
Muthiganj, Allahabad,

SRI RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME, DELHI

The Delhi centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has been working in the metropolis of India for the past two years and a half. Ever since its inception the activities of the Mission have been rapidly increasing, and besides the Math and the charitable dispensary, a new Students' Home has been opened about a year back. It is situated on the banks of the Jumna river, close by the college and the University in a house given free of rent by a generous gentleman of the place. An influential committee consisting of many prominent citizens of Delhi has been formed to place the Home on a sound financial footing and to look after other matters connected with the expansion of the institution. Already the Home has become a place of attraction for many public spirited gentlemen, and a centre of social service and other forms of students' activities.

R. K. SEVASTIRAMA, RANGOON

The eighth annual report of the Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Hospital, Rangoon, shows a splendid record of work done by the Mission in the cause of suffering humanity. During the year 1928 the total attendance of patients was 1,16,954. A considerable number of these patients came from the suburbs of Rangoon and from some remote districts of Burma. The number of indoor patients admitted was 1,616. The aggregate of the daily totals of attendance came up to 22,265 and the average daily attendance was 61. The average period of stay in the hospital in each case was 13 days. Some chronic cases, however, had to be kept for months. At the out-patients department the total number of attendance came up to 94,689 including men, women and children. The Corporation of Rangoon have added two new wards to the hospital for the treatment of women and children at a cost of about Rs. 21,000 and have thereby relieved the Sevashrama from the needs in which it stood before.

In the year under review the total receipts including the opening balance, was Rs. 32,644-2-6. The total amount incurred by expenditure was Rs. 26,584-10-6, thus leaving a credit balance of Rs. 6,059-8-0 as against the closing balance of Rs. 2,963-6-0 at the end of the previous year.

The hospital is a purely charitable institution; its existence depends mainly on the munificence of the public. As such the Sevashrama appeals to all for help.

RAMAKRISHNA TAPOVAN DISPENSARY, DHARCHULA, ALMORA

Situated in a remote district of the Himalayas, the Tapovan has been doing valuable service to the inhabitants of surrounding villages for the past five years. Its first Report shows that the dispensary treated 4,580 patients during the four years under review. At present it is also holding a coaching class for the benefit of the boys of the locality. Besides this the Tapovan renders all possible help to pilgrims going to the Holy Kailas. The institution at present stands in need of a workers' quarters, and two buildings for Indoor Hospital and a Rest House. The cost for these will come to Rs. 10,000. Contributions may be sent to Swami Anubhavananda, Sri R. K. Tapovan, Dharchula P.O., Almora, U.P.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SOCIETY, RANGOON

The Society was formed in 1916 by the amalgamation of two associations which bore the name of Sri Ramakrishna and have been working in Rangoon for a considerable length of time. The Society was formally handed over to the Mission in December 1921. From 1922 the Society showed a continued record of progress. The visit of some of the elderly Swamis of the Mission like Swamis Sankarananda, Bodhananda, Nirmalananda and Paramananda added great impetus to the work and raised the Society in the estimate of the Rangoon public.

The activities of the Society include relief work, Students' Home, rest house, free library and reading room, birthday celebrations and public lectures, religious classes and collection of rice for Sevashram.

It was Swami Shyamananda who was then in Rangoon, that started the Amherst Relief Work about the end of 1919. Under his able direction similar flood relief works were carried on, in the Ramru Island, in 1923, at Alethungyaw and Maunglaw in the Arakan Coast in 1915 and in the close vicinity of Pegu in the latter part of 1926.

The Swamis and other workers of the Mission who were engaged in the relief works, now and then felt the necessity of starting a Students' Home in Rangoon for the benefit of the Burmese boys and this was brought into being only in 1926. At present there are 9 boys in the Home, out of whom 5 are Burmese. Students are admitted without any distinction of caste, creed or colour.

A free rest house known as "Shashiniketan", is managed by the Society for the benefit of the casual visitors to Rangoon, who are given accommodation for a period, free of charge, without any distinction of caste.

A free library and reading room forms one of the major activities of the Society. The average daily attendance for the past three years is 75. The library contains 2274 volumes on varied subjects and has on its reading table 160 periodicals in different languages.

In addition to study classes intended for a few zealous students, public lectures are frequently organised to educate the public. Birthday anniversaries of World Teachers are observed, and persons of outstanding abilities lecture upon the lives and teachings of such great personages.

A few boys brought under the influence of the Society have formed themselves into a band of workers to collect rice regularly from door to door every Sunday morning for the benefit of the Sevashrama Charitable Hospital, and also to help the librarian in every possible way.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER

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मनस्त्वं व्योम त्वं मरुदसि मरुत्सारथिरसि

त्वमापस्त्वं भूमिस्त्वयि परिणतायां न हि परम् ।

त्वमेव स्वात्मानं परिणमयितुं विश्ववपुषा

चिदानन्दाकारं शिवयुवति भावेन विभृषे ॥

ददाने दीनेभ्यः श्रियमनिशमाप्तमानुसहशी-

ममन्दं सौन्दर्यं स्तवक्रमक्रमन्दं विक्रिति ।

तवास्मिन् मन्दारस्तवक्रमुभगे यातु चरणे

निमज्जन् मज्जीवः करणचरणैः षट्चरणताम् ॥

Oh, youthful consort of Siva, Thou art mind, ether, air, fire, water and earth. Indeed there is nothing beyond Thee who hast explicated Thyself into this world of phenomena. By Thy will dost Thou manifest Thy consciousness and bliss in the body of the universe.

Oh Mother, may I with my six organs as my feet be, as it were, the six-footed bee and seek Thy feet which ever give prosperity to the poor in fulfilment of their own desires. May I seek refuge in Thy feet which, beautiful with bunches of Mandara flowers, shed the honey of loveliness.

ANANDALAHARI

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

THE MASTER'S VISIT TO THE RESIDENCE OF SRIJUT JAYGOPAL SEN

I

It is the 20th of November, 1883. To-day at about 4 p. m. the Master visited the Lily Cottage—the residence of Srijut Keshab Chandra Sen in Calcutta. Keshab is seriously ill and is going to depart from the world soon. After seeing Keshab the Master has come in the company of a few devotees to the house of Srijut Jaygopal Sen on the Mathaghasa Lane at about seven in the evening.

Many are the thoughts that are arising in the minds of the devotees,—“The Master remains in the God-intoxicated state night and day. He is married but does not live with his wife like the ordinary householder. He respects her, worships her; with her he talks of God, sings of God, worships and meditates on God. He has absolutely no worldly relation with her. He sees that God alone is real and everything else unreal. He cannot touch a coin, nor anything made of metals like pots and cups. He cannot also bear the touch of woman. If he happens to touch any, he feels an excruciating pain in the part of his body that is so touched, as if he has been stung by a cat-fish. If he takes a silver coin or gold in his hands, the hands become bent and distorted, and he finds it impossible to breathe. After the thing is thrown away he is able to breathe normally.”

These and many other thoughts are arising in the minds of the devotees. “Is it necessary,” thinks one, “to give up the world? Is there any use in proceeding with my studies further? In case I do not marry, I need not accept any service for the sake of earning money. But should father and mother be forsaken?” “I am married,” thinks another, “and have got children too. I am to maintain my family. Like the Master, I too wish to remain steeped in Divine love. When I see the Master, I am made to think: what am I doing? He is thinking of God night and day without any break like the flow of oil from one cup into another, while I am running after worldly thoughts! The sight of the Master alone is like a ray of light in a corner of the cloudy sky. But now how am I to solve the problem of life?

*Translated from M's diary originally published in Bengali.

"He has shown us the way doing things himself. Why then do I cherish doubts still ?

" 'Breaking through the sand-dam let me satisfy my heart's wish'—so sings the poet. Is the world really like a sand-dam ? If a person comes to get the right sort of love for the Lord, he will not have worldly calculations any more. If the river is in high floods, what is there to check it? The love that made Sri Gauranga put on the loin-cloth of the monk, the love that made Jesus live in wilderness with his mind fixed in God and made him give up his life looking up to the face of the ever-loving Father in Heaven, the love that made Buddha renounce his princely enjoyments and take to the life of a monk,—if a particle of that love rises in the heart, this unreal world would be left far far behind !

"Well, what is the course left to those who are weak, who have not been endowed with Divine love, who are leading the life of a worldly creature, whose feet are fettered by the shackles of Maya ? Let us see what this lover-ascetic tells us."—Such are the thoughts that are occupying the minds of the devotees.

The Master is seated along with the devotees in the parlour of Jaygopal Sen. In front of him are sitting Jaygopal, his relations and neighbours. One of the neighbours is ready to carry on a discussion with the Master. He comes forward and begins the conversation. Jaygopal's brother Vaikuntha is also present.

HOUSEHOLDER'S LIFE AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Vaikuntha : We are all worldly people. Please give us some advice.

Sri Ramakrishna : First know the Lord, and then hold His feet with one hand and do your worldly duties with the other.

Vaikuntha : Sir, is the world unreal ?

Sri Ramakrishna : It is unreal so long as the Lord is not realised. During this period man forgets Him and becomes swayed by the thought of "mine". He gets entangled in Maya. He is enchanted by the objects of lust and greed, and sinks into worldliness more and more. Being deluded by Maya he forgets himself so much that he cannot escape although there is the way out. This is what is said in the song :—

'The Maya of the Great Enchantress has cast such a spell that Brahma and Vishnu are overpowered ; so what can the poor Jiva do ?

Men set the fishing trap in the water, and fishes get into it. There is the way out but still they cannot escape.

The caterpillar makes its own cocoon ; it can, if it wants to, come out of it. But deluded by the Great Enchantress, it brings about its own death by the product of its own secretion.'

"You yourselves are seeing that the world is unreal. Don't you ? Just consider this. Many were the people who came into the world and then went away. Many were born and then passed away. Things in the world exist in this moment, and in the next they cease to be. They are unreal. Those whom you call your very own, cease to be yours, the moment you close your eyes (for the last time). A person may have none to stand in his way. But still, it may be, owing to the attachment for his grandson he cannot retire to Benares to spend the last days of his life. He thinks, 'What will become of my Hari !' So you see—'There is the way out, but still the fishes cannot escape'. 'The caterpillar brings about its own death by the product of its own secretion.' This kind of world is false, unreal."

Neighbour : Sir, why should we place one hand on the feet of the Lord and the other on the world ? If the world is unreal, why should we place even one hand on the world ?

Sri Ramakrishna : If after realising God you live in the world it will not appear to be unreal. Just listen to a song :—

'Oh my soul, why dost thou not learn of the ways of farming. What a precious human field thou hast left fallow ? Hadst thou cultivated it, it would have yielded a crop of gold.

Put up as hedge the name of Mother Kali and the crop will not be tampered with. That strong fence of the name of the Divine Mother even Yama the King of Death does not dare to approach.

Know this, that either to-day or a century later the field will be forfeited. So, oh my soul, reap a harvest from it to your heart's content, so long as it is in your possession.

Sow the seed thou hast received from the guru and sprinkle on it the water of devotion. If thou canst not do the work alone, why not take Ramprasād (the Psalmist) also along with thee?'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE UPLIFT OF THE INDIAN MASSES

A nation, like an individual, runs through a process of periodic rise and fall. This is an invariable law of Nature and its subtle working is more or less witnessed in the life-history of all the nations in the world. After a period of expansion there is noticed a period of depression. The music of life is not heard for a while, but with the passing away of that wave of inertia the collective life of the nation rebounds anew to its normal key and strikes a note of harmony adding more vigour and coherence to its diversified activities. The course of Indian life is not an exception to this universal phenomenon. The history of India stands chequered by such periodic ups and downs, and at every juncture of her career we invariably meet with some striking personalities standing head and shoulders above the rest and animating the people with their revolutionary ideas. The closing years of the 19th century witnessed in India such a galaxy of heroic figures whose master-spirit sent a thrill of inspiration through the country and galvanised the Indian minds with a current of new life and enthusiasm. Foremost amongst these stood Swami Vivekananda who, as a living embodiment of the lofty idealism of India's cultural life, fulfilled in ways more than one the aspiration of her soul. A life of absolute renunciation, crowned with the deepest realisation of the eternal verity of human existence and consecrated at the altar of humanity was an imperious need of the age; for India was never so forgetful of her glorious traditions and culture as then. The whole outlook on life underwent a miraculous transformation; the Western thought and idealism sat like a mighty incubus on the Indian mind, stifling as it were the very play of its living forces. And in the new ferment the spiritual note of India's collective life was completely lost sight of. It was Swami Vivekananda who with his penetrating vision was able to realise the process of slow suicide the nation had been subjected to with the acceptance of the Occidental philosophy as the determinant of its future destiny. Enriched with the wealth of his spiritual realisation he set himself to the herculean task of rebuilding the nation on the basis of indigenous thought and culture. In his own life he made it distinctly clear that India must stand on her own culture rooted in the past but supplement it with the incoming ideas of the West in so far they contribute to her healthy growth and progress along the orbit of her wonted traditions. He pointed out that a full-fledged nation could never be expected to come into being until the sleeping masses were roused from their age-long slumber

and enlightened to realise their legitimate position in the corporate activity of the nation. It is the unfailing testimony of history that no nation has ever been able to build its destiny on a stable foundation where there has been an attempt to ignore the claims of the toiling masses. For it is *their* labour and life that constitute in short the very warp and weft of the fabric of national existence. In India where more than 90 per cent. of her population are steeped in the darkness of rank ignorance and can hardly understand their place of importance in the grand process of national reconstruction, it would be a sheer travesty of patriotism to launch schemes of national regeneration without an adequate provision for the safeguard of their interests and the awakening of their souls to the actualities of the situation. It is the masses that build up a civilisation and again it is they that level it to the dust. And it cannot be denied that without the strengthening of the national backbone, the country shall hardly be able to stand the fiery ordeal that confronts it in its grim struggle for emancipation. That is why Swami Vivekananda shed the last drop of his life blood for the awakening of the sleeping Indian Leviathan; for he realised that once it was roused, no power on earth, no persecution, no coercion could resist its strength and check its unfettered march to the goal.

The heart of Swami Vivekananda made the quickest response to the bitter agony of the suffering souls of India. His whole life is, in fact, a burning example of maddening solicitude *for the uplift of the sunken masses*. His writings and speeches breathe an all-consuming passion of love for his voiceless countrymen who have been grovelling for centuries in the mud-puddle of superstition and been denied all the healthy advantages in society, that open out channels for a free expression of life. As a matter of fact it is the upper classes of the Hindu society, who are primarily responsible for this regrettable state of affairs. The countless millions whose labour and life have contributed to the affluence of the upper classes, have, by a mysterious combination of circumstances, been reduced almost to the level of inarticulate brutes and forced to lead a life of utter stagnation in their own land. They have, moreover, been made to serve as footstool to the persons in authority in every age and eventually knocked down when they demanded a fulfilment of their legitimate claim to the rights and privileges! We shall try to show from the writings and speeches of Swami Vivekananda how bitterly did he feel the injustice done to this suffering and ignorant humanity in this country. Exclusiveness has been the bane of our collective existence and has proved in no small measure the ultimate cause of our ruin and downfall. So did Swami Vivekananda make the poignant remark in his *Modern India*: "Such

is the strange irony of fate, such is the queer working of Maya, that they, from whom this power is directly or indirectly drawn, by fair means or foul,—by deceit, stratagem, force, or by voluntary gift,—they soon cease to be taken into account by the leading class. When in course of time, the priestly power totally estranged itself from the subject masses,—the real dynamo of its power,—it was overthrown by the then kingly power taking its stand on the strength of the subject people ; again, the kingly power, judging itself to be perfectly independent, created a gaping chasm between itself and the subject people, only to be itself destroyed, or become a mere puppet in the hands of the Vaishyas, who now succeeded in securing a relatively greater co-operation of the mass of the people. The Vaishyas have now gained their end ; so, they no longer deign to count on help from the subject people, and are trying their best to dissociate themselves from them ; consequently, here is being sown the seed of destruction of this power as well." No truer words have so boldly and eloquently been spoken and no truer diagnosis of the disease of our national organism has been more correctly made. The sad spectacle of a giant race dying of starvation and vegetating in the filthy atmosphere of a caste-ridden society, clinging to myriad superstitious born of ignorance and sinking rapidly into a life of hopeless inactivity, haunted his imagination day and night and gave him no rest till the last moment of his life. A patriot and a saint combined in one, Swami Vivekananda pressed his spiritual wealth to the service of his motherland. "When I was in the Western countries," said the Swami once to his brother monks at Belur, "I prayed to the Divine Mother, 'People here are sleeping on a bed of flowers, they eat all kinds of delicacies, and what do they not enjoy ? While people in our country are dying of starvation. Mother, will there be no way for them?' One of the objects of my going to the West to preach religion was to see *if I could find any means for feeding the people of this country.*" He wanted a heroic band of young men who fired with the zeal of holiness and renunciation and a deep-seated faith in the Lord, must go out in batches from village to village with the message of love and toleration, equality and brotherhood and implant in the minds of the people an unshakable conviction of the greatness of their life and culture and awaken them to the consciousness of their infinite possibilities. The treasures of Indian life are a sealed book to them. And to open their vision to the richness of their cultural life, nothing is more potent than the spread of education among the masses. But such is the irony of fate, it is this education of the masses which has been most severely left alone. No sincere effort has hitherto been made to pool our scattered energies and divert them to this aspect of our national problem. The education the coun-

try needs is not the type of education which is being imparted to the Indians to-day under the British imperialism. For, "the education", says the Swami, "which does not help the common masses of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion,—is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs. The education that you are receiving in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence."

Swami Vivekananda dreamt bold dreams of a national federation wherein the masses quickened into self-conscious beings must participate to mould their social and political destiny. But the intelligence of the people could hardly be stirred up into a living force unless they were admitted into the store-house of culture to feed their famished brain and heart. The education must therefore be on indigenous lines so that their natural aptitudes may be developed and their vision directed to the deeper springs of individual and collective life. They have for ages been denied the benefit of culture, and they have moreover been characterised as 'dense and slow' and too conservative to receive new explosive thoughts and ideas. But it cannot be ignored that this condition of existence is not their own seeking. It is the tyranny of social life that has served to extinguish the last spark of enthusiasm for a higher idealism in them. The vision of a new life instinct with infinite possibility must be held anew before them. For nothing is more powerful to stimulate dormant energy and to electrify human imagination than the consciousness of one's own intrinsic greatness and capacity to move the world by one's power and thought. The masses have lost all sense of self-respect, not because there is no vitality in them but because they have for ages been treated like beasts of burden and taught dog-like to lick the feet of the higher classes. Any education that fails to call forth the real 'man' in the individual but serves only to stifle the free manifestation of the sterling qualities of head and heart stands self-condemned. The people are still potentially great and it is the duty of the leaders in society to open facilities and provide means for the stirring up of the dormant powers in them. In this blessed land of ours the centre of life is religion and if education is divorced from it, it shall invariably fail to bring out the latent forces of their life and produce the desired result. "Touch him on spirituality, on religion, on God, on the soul, on the Infinite, on spiritual freedom", says the Swami, "and I assure you, the lowest peasant in India is better informed on these subjects than many a so-called philosopher in other lands." For religion is the very breath of her national being and the training

to be rendered effective must appeal to the spiritual instincts of the people. They must be made to think that they are potentially as great as the most powerful in the world and that their capacity for action is lying dormant in them. Besides, the eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of all must be brought home to their minds ; for this is the only principle that would enable them to get over the inferiority complex ; and this is the dominant idea that must stand as the background of all our teachings and schemes for imparting education to the masses. It was for this reason that Swami Vivekananda once said, " I will rouse them through the infallible power of Vedic Mantras.....Go over from village to village, from one portion of the country to another, and preach this message of fearlessness to all, from the Brahmin to the Chaudala. Tell each and all that infinite power resides within them, that they are sharers of immortal Bliss. Thus rouse up the Rajas within them—make them fit for the struggle for existence, then speak to them about salvation hereafter."

But along with the unfolding of this spiritual idealism before the people, there must be a consolidated effort to impart secular education to the masses. Education must not be limited to the knowledge of the religious truths alone, but must be comprehensive enough to embrace all the aspects of human culture both secular and spiritual. To translate his ideas into action Swamiji desired to cover the country with a net-work of two types of institutions for training workers who would be both spiritual and secular instructors to the masses. The people should be taught history, geography, science, literature, along with the profound truths of religion. For, the purpose of education would be defeated if it aims merely at manufacturing bands of clerks or officials. " What nonsense have you learnt ? " said the Swami indignantly. " Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language, and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourselves educated ! Fie upon you ! Is this education ?.....Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharat, proverbial for its wealth". ".....The common people have suffered oppression for thousand years—suffered it without murmur and as a result have got wonderful fortitude. They have suffered eternal misery which has given them unflinching vitality. Living on a handful of oatmeal they can convulse the world ; give only half a piece of bread, and the whole world would not be big enough to contain their energy.....Besides, they have got the wonderful strength that comes of a pure and moral life, which is not to be found anywhere else in the world. Such peacefulness, such contentment, such love, such power of silent and incessant work, and manifestation of lion's strength in times of action—where else wil

you find these?" Swamiji pointed out that Western science must be pressed into service for the discovery of new avenues to production and the masses must be admitted to the knowledge that has so long been considered to be the monopoly of the higher classes so that the people may gain back their lost individuality, stand on their own legs and march forward on the path of progress as a self-conscious unit of our collective life.

But the poverty of the masses is an insuperable barrier to the attainment of a wholesome education. It has almost robbed them of all their enthusiasm for a higher vision of life. But these discouraging circumstances notwithstanding, education of the people cannot be deferred in expectation of a better situation in the near future. The political and social reconstruction of the land is inseparably wedded to the task of educating the country and 'if the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him.' The ideas must be imparted in the language of the people. But Sanskrit education must not at the same time be tabooed. The history of our country shows that though the attempts of Ramanuja, Chaitanya and Kavir to raise the lower classes of India attained to a considerable degree of fruition during their life-time, the people sank back as rapidly as they rose, into a state of utter ignorance within a few years of their passing away. The reason is not far to seek. The people were raised but this uplifting process could not be sustained for long as it lacked the backing of the ennobling vigour of Sanskrit culture. In India Sanskrit and culture go hand in hand, and there is an ineffable dignity and prestige inherent in this sacred language. Even Buddha the greatest champion of the submerged sections of humanity made almost the very same blunder. Sanskrit was put under a ban as it were. 'Knowledge came but the prestige was not there.' So did Swami Vivekananda point out: "Teach the masses in the vernaculars, give them ideas; they will get information, but something more is necessary; give them *culture*. Until you give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses." Besides, the only effective means to break down the citadel of caste-pride, conservatism and exclusiveness of the higher classes is to diffuse Sanskrit culture among the masses. For, when the culture is appropriated by the people, the artificial barrier between the high and the low must inevitably crumble to pieces, and there would grow up a feeling of toleration and sympathy as a result of the removal of this long-standing wall of cultural separation. The signs of unrest are already in the air. The masses themselves shall not suffer this kind of iniquity to persist for long. The rising of the Sudra class is but a natural

sequence in the succession of historical phenomena in India to day. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas had a full run of their sovereignty in the past; the Vaishyas—now the ruling power in India—have already dug their own graves by dissociating themselves from the Sudras—the primary source of their elevation. 'The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to slowly break upon the Western world, and the thoughtful are at their wit's end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon.' The sleeping Indian Leviathan has also been manifesting unmistakable signs of an awakening. And it is time that exclusiveness should be eliminated to accommodate this indispensable element in the arena of our social activity for a healthy and orderly growth of our manhood.

Another galling feature of our life is the curse of untouchability. It has served in no small measure to undermine the solidarity of our corporate life. "To what a ludicrous state are we brought?" says the Swami. "If a bhangi comes to any body as a bhangi, he would be shunned as the plague, but no sooner does he get a cupful of water poured upon his head with some mutterings of prayers by a Padri, and get a coat to his back, no matter how threadbare, and come into the room of the most orthodox Hindu—I don't see the man who then dares refuse him a chair and a hearty shake of the hands!! Irony can go no further!!" Nothing has indeed done more harm to the nation than this spirit of Don't-touch-ism. It has alienated a huge section of Indian population from the higher classes who have become the self-constituted leaders in the society to-day. "Alas!" exclaimed the Swami in the bitterest agony of his heart, "nobody thinks of the poor of the country. They are the backbone of the country, who by their labour are producing food,—these poor people, the sweepers and labourers, who if they stop work for one day will create a panic in the town. But there is none to sympathise with them, none to console them in their misery. Just see, for want of sympathy from the Hindus thousands of pariahs in Madras are turning Christians. Don't think this is simply due to the pinch of hunger, it is because they do not get any sympathy from us. We are day and night calling out to them, 'Don't touch us! Don't touch us!' Is there any compassion or kindness of heart in the country? Only a class of 'Don't-touchists.' Kick such customs out." Indeed, the well-being of the land demands that such a pernicious custom should at once be kicked out of the bounds of Hindu society. This is one of the greatest evils that have resulted from the tyranny of the priestly classes in India. Hinduism in its purest form is incompatible with this spirit of exclusiveness. The ultimate object of Hindu religion is to carry humanity beyond the pale of this petty-minded intolerance and to establish brotherhood

among mankind by an advocacy of the unity of all life and the potential divinity of man. Sankara left this essential feature of Hindūism—the religion of the Vedānto—in the hills and forests. It is Swami Vivekananda who has again brought it out within the easy reach of the work-a-day-world. He has bequeathed to his countrymen an undying sympathy for the poor and the helpless and a high souled love for the untouchable—the backbone of our country. For he knew that if India was to rise, she must rise through the elevation of the masses.

It was the object of the Swami to rouse the masses to the dignity of their own position and to make them shake off their inferiority complex; for he realised that with the acquisition of knowledge a fisherman would be a better fisherman, a peasant a better peasant, and the people, instead of giving up their respective calling in life, would, moreover, be able to apply their knowledge to the better performance of their work. Already the signs of a new awakening are discernible in the horizon of Indian life. The purple dawn has cast its lovely hue all over the land, and the masses are slowly but surely moving onward to bathe in the full splendour of a meridian sun. The rays have penetrated into their humble huts and cottages and have maddened them with the vision of a cloudless sky. It is no use blinking at facts. The grovelling masses are out to break the fetters and to rise to the full stature of manhood. Time has come for them—the oppressed and the downtrodden—to stand once more in the full glory of a rejuvenated life and to wring out freedom from the hands of destiny. "You, the upper classes of India, —" said the Swami in righteous indignation, "do you think you are alive? You are but mummies ten thousand years old!.....It is you who are the real 'walking corpses'. Your houses, your furniture look like museum specimens, so lifeless and antiquated they are;.....You represent the past tense with all its varieties of form jumbled into one.....You are the void, the unsubstantial nonentities of the future. Denizens of the dreamland, why are you loitering any longer?.....Aye, in your bony fingers are some priceless rings of jewel treasured up by your ancestors, and within the embrace of your stinking corpses are preserved a good many treasure-chests... ..In these days of free education and enlightenment, pass them on to your heirs, aye, do it as quickly as you can. You merge yourselves in the void and disappear, and let New India arise in your place. Let her arise—out of the peasant's cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets. Let her emerge from the groves and forests, from hills and mountains.....Skeletons of the Past, there, before you, are your successors, the

India that is to be. Throw those treasure-chests of yours and those jewelled rings among them,—as soon as you can ; and you—vanish into air, and be seen no more,—only keep your ears open. No sooner will you disappear than you will hear the inaugural shout of Renaissance India—ringing with the voice of a million thunders and reverberating throughout the universe—‘Wah Guru Ki Fateh’—Victory to the Guru!”

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

By Swami Gambhirananda

All roads lead to Rome ; but are they fixed as regards their position and shape, for all ages to come ? That question did not certainly arise when Rome was a living city and exhibited a dynamic enthusiasm all around. The whole country throbbed with new hopes and was ever in the travails of new births. The roads then stood as landmarks in the progressive history of a living people and ever and anon they changed and developed. A new group enamoured of the city's glory and attracted by the tempting promises chalked out a new path along still undefined tracts, while still others joined themselves to these highways by short village roads. That was the picture of Rome as she sat among a people surging with ever increasing love for her ; and as in a ‘Swayambara’ of old, ever and anon new princes threaded their way through the multitude, only for a look of the beautiful—and if possible, to receive the much-valued garland of love. In response to these pressing demands, the country underwent kaleidoscopic changes. Roads were then no roads but stood as concrete expressions of the spirit that stirs the hero in man and sets upon the springs of action. All roads led to Rome because they were dynamic and pliant realities that responded to the will and aspiration of the people. But obviously there was a limit to this road-making, because people could not for ever maintain this sustained activity and the roads in time became rigid and fixed.

In the field of the spirit the same principle is at work and as there is no limit to unexplored regions the possibility of novelty is infinite. But is this always recognised ? In religion there is every possibility that any attempt for new consummation will be branded as heresy and subjected to persecution—and why not ? The last interrogation is knocking at our door with added vehemence just at the present moment when new ideas and institutions have like Aladin's magic lamp transformed society overnight. Religious forms that grew up in response to the challenge of certain definite problems

have been suddenly transplanted into a new soil and now lack vigour and adaptability. The success of material science and class-struggle for reaping its advantages has for a moment diverted all energy from the field of religion, and stagnation and death are looming large in the horizon. Should religion now leave its accustomed grooves and seek new fields of self-realisation? The existing religions of the world shrink from bravely facing this huge problem and have not yet manifested a tendency to do so in any active or successful form. The orthodox are positively against any such attempt, while the more vigorous in their eagerness to move with the time have either made a ship-wreck of their creed or turned it into a bundle of ethical dogmas that answer only to the immediate social, political and economical needs. The spirit is thrown overboard and creeds have become synonymous with opportunistic adjustments. If religion is to be a living force we cannot certainly accept either of these extremes. We cannot part with the spirit nor can we overlook the needs of time. The best solution is a combination of the two.

What is religion? Is it not in essence an attempt to see the ultimate reality through ever-shifting environments or the magic veil that ignorance ever weaves around us? Anthropologists have failed to discover why new cultures come into existence and clash with each other and remould themselves. But changes take place nevertheless. We call this inexplicable element, the inscrutable power of God. It has a universal bearing and an individual bearing too. Thus religion admits of an adjustment not only from the point of view of groups but also from the standpoint of their component parts. So religion has a dynamic character from the temporal standpoint, for environments change from age to age and from second to second. Conceived as a struggle it is of the nature of a constant flux. But people are loath to admit this. They argue that since spiritual men cannot afford to be volatile, religion should not be so flexible. Besides, the supermen alone can know what is good, and the determination of spiritual forms should not be left to the tender mercy of the commonalty. Let us see what these supermen do!

How is a change introduced? There is a consciousness of a novel situation,—the difficulty of arranging new problems in the old pigeon holes. There are two ways open—either to ignore them and court stagnation and perchance death or face them and ensure a new lease of life. Fortunately for the progress of mankind, living societies have long discovered that expansion is life while contraction is death. The shock of new cultures at first seems to arrest the natural progress of the race, but suddenly the pent up vitality sallies forth into new creations. The need for the novel first appeals to the few. They give

the social lyre a shake and try to bring forth the natural symphony—they fail. Others at once take up the task, but retire only half-satisfied. At last comes the Master in whose success is fulfilled the will of the whole congregation. The wondering multitude at once recognise this and join him with great enthusiasm.

But the real task only begins with that great discovery. The advent of a prophet symbolises only the solution of an intricate puzzle. He demonstrates that no difficulty is unsurmountable for a determined people. He spends his life as a living example of new achievements and thereby shows the sure means of grappling with our immediate social and personal problems. He breathes into us a faith in human destiny that no veil of ignorance is strong enough to keep unrevealed. When darkness envelopes all around and hope is not—he shines forth as the beacon light—for that is exactly the situation that calls in the Messiah. The veil of ignorance is no more able to enthrall an expanding soul than a dreadful dream is able to smother the creative mind. But we mortals in our innate lethargy miss the real significance of a great life and conveniently think that a blind imitation is enough to save the race! Every hero acts in response to some particular situation. Thus every little act of his has a relative value and a relative significance. To isolate him from his natural environment and idolise and idealise him for ignorant fools, is to make a parody of the greatness that was a living reality only by its very limitations. It may be of great immediate service to deify a hero, but unless the man in him is also equally recognised, humanity will only be poorer by it.

We take it then that the real worth of a superman is that he enfranchises the hero in others and thereby opens the door to perennial achievements. He acts out of the spontaneity of his heart and orders his environment with a definite purpose. He takes matter as he finds it, but his struggle to see the spirit through it gives it a new orientation so that each little act synchronises with a spiritual idea and seems quite natural. From the subjective standpoint again, his acts stand for two distinct mental tendencies, or rather two different manifestations of the same tendency. He not only accepts passively, but also creates actively. There is a conscious effort to evolve new forms for self-manifestation and reject unnecessary ones at every stage of his life. A superman, when studied in this light, can only be a fountain of inspiration. We should remember that this inspiration is effective only in proportion as we recognise and desire it. There is a grim irony in the words of Lord Sri Krishna—ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहं—(In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires). Verily the Lord loves his devotees so much that he fulfils

their desires with a scrupulous exactitude. We are not here concerned with the spiritual fact that the most deluded person, when he seeks God sincerely, is ultimately rewarded with beatitude. What invites our immediate attention is that such ignorant sincerity is a rare thing and cannot be prescribed for the generality of mankind. God being the essence of knowledge crude ideas are more compatible with pseudo-religion, than with spiritualism proper. We do not overlook the fact that most people advance by following some leader, but even then the play of initiative is perceptible everywhere. Progress lies in stimulating this power of initiative and not in achieving a temporary success by following a chance leader. Any creed therefore that tends to sap this driving force must necessarily be approached with care. Thoughtless imitation is doubly mischievous. It makes the man less than he really is and the model greater than its real worth. A soldier does well to obey the general and within his narrow domain exert his personality. But he will be a silly ass to ape the general or think himself a human automaton.

Let us come to more concrete spiritual facts. The ancients have discovered several ways of reaching God, *viz.*, Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana. But we have yet to find a man who can fully satisfy the conditions laid down by any of them. Still are there people who endeavour to transform themselves, all of a sudden, into Jnanayogins, Rajayogins and what not. Because Caesar reached Rome from a certain place by a certain path, Antony from quite a different place hopes to do so again! The question arises—should a man have no chosen path of his own to reach the ideal? We say emphatically that it is exactly with a view to keep the ideal bright that we want to divert the attention from set paths. The surer guide in such a case is to intensify the desire for the goal. When that is satisfied all roads will necessarily lead to it. What becomes then of the several modes of worship and the different paths of spiritual practice? Well, they are either types and models that help us in our endeavours or are a scientific presentation of the spiritual phenomena that took place in the past. Let us take an example from Art. There are models from master artists and there is a science of Art. The model and the science have an indispensable value, but their application need not necessarily be uniform. Arts—Grecian, Egyptian, Gothic or Indian—are a constant source of pleasure to this day, either in the original or in their reproductions, but there is no sense in confining the activities of artists within their short limits. A vigorous nation will ever blend them and express its desires in a thousand new creations. Religious forms, springing as they do from real lives, also change and intermingle in response to new circumstances.

Now this broad statement goes directly against all our accepted notion of spiritual progress. Spirituality suggests more or less a 'settled' life which is the very opposite of motion. According to 'orthodox' view a spiritual man must be literally dead to this world. All his activities must be in the region of the spirit. Social forms therefore matter little with him. His worldly existence is tolerated only because self-immolation is a greater sin. Stereotyped forms may therefore be quite beneficial to a spiritual man, though from the social point of view it is a definite loss. Now, as we have already hinted we are not concerned here with extra-ordinary possibilities. Society can ill-afford to remain stationary. "Motion is not a bad thing; it is life as opposed to stagnation, paralysis and death. It is novelty as opposed to monotony; and novelty is so necessary to us that if you take the best thing within your reach (say the best food, the best music, the best book, the best state of mind or the best anything that remains the same always) and if you stick to it long enough you will come to loathe it." But "Motion is delightful when we can control it, guide it and stop it when it is taking us into danger; uncontrolled motion is terrible."—(Bernard Shaw). Motion is not, as many suppose, the result of a selective and conscious process, but oftener comes unsolicited; nor are the laws of the advent of new cultures well-defined. The real point at issue, therefore, is not whether we can afford to remain stationary but how to control this motion. It is exactly here that from the social point of view, religion becomes a necessity. Religion from this standpoint is a controlled motion towards the best possible goal. When revolutionary people cry about pulling down all religions, what they really mean is to emphasise this feature of flexibility. Stereotyped forms without a new interpretation and without a new setting are positively harmful.

Neo-Hinduism, therefore, stands not only for synthesis of existing creeds, but also for bringing religion into line with life itself. In all social, religious and political problems the main attention must be kept on *man* and not on a mere perfection of *forms*.

GURU NANAK AND A GREATER INDIA

By T. L. Vaswani

"Happy", says a French thinker, "are the nations whose sacred sources are not exhausted." Man lives by love and reverence. To abolish religion would be to abolish India. But religion must not be confounded with ceremonies, creeds or controversies. Religion is life. Spiritual evolution may well be represented as a Tree of Life and

love is the rich fruitage of this Tree,—Love of God and man. Religion came to harmonise and humanise the diverse activities and relationships of human life. And Guru Nanak Dev, a prophet of harmony, was a hero of religion,—one of the greatest in Indian history, nay, in the history of humanity.

Born in 1469, 14 years earlier than Luther, he passed away in 1538,—8 years earlier than Luther. Like Luther he laid the basis of a new reformation. But Nanak's reformation unlike Luther's did not turn to princes for its support and progress. Guru Nanak's reformation was in a true sense democratic. Guru Nanak initiated a people's movement in religion. Like Buddha, Nanak left the house of his father who was a land steward and merchant to join the Brotherhood of the Poor. Indeed, in fellowship with the poor, in service of the weak and fettered is that true freedom which modern democracies have missed. Some have called Guru Nanak the Luther of India. But to us the Guru was greater than Luther. Two of the greatest figures of Europe were Luther and St. Francis. These two master-spirits seemed to have come together in Guru Nanak. He had Luther's zeal to reform religion,—to lift it from the formal and the conventional to the simple and practical. Guru Nanak was like Francis of Assissi, a poet. Each taught through simple songs and stories. Each had a rich vein of humour. Each was a wanderer, a troubadour of God,—travelling from place to place singing the sacred name. Each was a mystic. And in each we hear the authentic voice of Jesus the Blessed. For Jesus said :—"God is Love." And early Christianity was a Bhakti Marga, a way of faith, devotion and love. And did not Guru Nanak sing again and again :—

"His Love is infinitely inexpressible,
How shall I write it ?"

One of the greatest mystics of history, Guru Nanak put emphasis on direct experience of the Divine. Not hearsay, not tradition, not ceremonialism, not books, priests, creeds but *direct* experience. The Guru was a Singer of the Open Secret, a Teacher of the God within. He travelled widely. He visited Hindu pilgrimages. He went to Muslim countries and visited Mecca. He travelled in Turkestan and Russia. Everywhere he sang and preached the truth of the simple way to God ; for God is not a distant Deity. "Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet." As Lao-tzse said :—"Without going out of doors, we may know (the Essence) of the whole world." This Essence, the Guru called the NAMA, SAT NAMA, the Eternal Verity. In the revelation that came to him at the time of his immersion in the water,—according to a beautiful story in the Janmasakhi,—he saw God as the "Eternal Verity" and the Word that came

to him was :—"I have given thee My Name : to That be thou dedicated !" And Nanak's life was dedicated to the Name. His father rebuked him for not "walking after the manner of the other people". Nanak was still true to His call. He sang the Name : he rejoiced in the Name : to multitudes in many countries he preached the Name. He saw the people were unhappy : he preached to them the truth that in the Name was the healing of all ills.

If Modern India could but listen in her heart to the teaching of Guru Nanak ! "I have renounced all sects", he said at Baghdad. He loved alike Hindus and Muslims. On his travels, he took two singers,—one a Hindu, the other a Muslim. Sheikh Farid was a devoted friend of the Guru ; and Muslims called him "Shah"—a title given to great dervishes and saints. His synthesis of religion transcended and therefore included the Hindu and the Muslim ideals. He gave his love freely to all, and set at naught conventions of creeds and castes. He was a brother of the poor, the criminal and the outcaste. His socialism was not atheistic ; it grew out of a vision of God's love flowing into the hearts of men. We are brothers,—in God. And the more we think of it the more we feel that a new Indian nation should be built not in blind imitation of the West nor in recent socio-economic theories of European thinkers but in the vital message of India's seers and prophets and saints.

One great truth preached by Guru Nanak is of great value to modern thought. This truth may be expressed thus :—The power of God is not *dynamic* : the power of God is *sacrificial*. God comes to us not as king but as the servant of servants. He is the "power" of love. God comes to us as sacrificial *shakti*. He comes to us in humility,—in the guise of the simple and the poor. He comes to us not in thunder but in silent sacrifice. From this follows a truth of profound significance. Not the power of kings and conquerors but the sacrificial *shakti* of silent servants of the poor will conquer the world. The shouts and noises of these days will pass away : the distinguished of to day will be the extinguished of to morrow : our big men and big organisations will pass into oblivion. The survival-value belongs to the little ones, to them who worship the Lord in the little ones, the broken ones. The Infinite has become the infinitesimal : so may we learn of Nature and her Lord the lesson of humility. And builders of a new India, a Greater India, will be found not among the trumpeters nor the titled ones but among the simple and unknown who clothed with poverty and covered with dust will give to her children the message of her saints and Rishis and worship her with toil and tear.

THE ASHRAMAS

(Continued from the last issue)

By Sir John Woodroffe

According to Dattātreyā the fourth Ashrama is only for Brāhmanas: the Kshatriya has three: the Vaishya two: and the Shūdra, the Grihastha (household) Ashrama only. But in practice it is not necessarily so. Further the fourth stage is properly realised through the third. It has however been said:—(Yadahareva virajet tadahareva prabrajot Brahmacharyādvā grihādvā vanādvā sannyasyashrinuyāt)—“On whatsoever day dispassion (Vairāgya) springs, upon that day let him wander (take the fourth Ashrama). Having entered Sannyāsa either from the student, household or forest Ashrama let him listen to Veda”. Today there are in general two Ashramas, the second and fourth. When absence of thirst for worldly things (Trishnā) arises then the Sannyāsa Ashrama may be adopted and not before without danger of fall. For if after a man has attained Vairāgya he again falls into the clutches of desire (Rāga), he goes to Hell. The test of competency then is whether a man is detached (Virakta). There are sayings which appear to exclude from Sannyāsa, Shūdras, women and eunuchs. This is on the ground that the two former have no sacrament (Samskāra). Other sayings of a broader character allow it to the two former where there is a firm (Tivra) Vairāgya. Vyāsa merely prohibits to Shūdras the use of Svadhā (in Tarpana), Svāhā and Vashat (in Homa), etc., (See Yatidharmanirnaya II. 161, but at p. 172 it is said women and Shūdras are excluded. As to eunuchs and the uxorious see ib. 177). Thus the great women Maitreyī and Gārgī and the Shūdra Vidura were knowers of Brahman (Tattvavit)—(In Yatidharmanirnaya II. 162 it is said that women and Shūdras may adopt Viramārga though at p. 160 ib. it is stated that Viramārga is forbidden in the Kali-yuga). Looking at the matter from a broad point of view we must consider what Sannyāsa is and how it arises and who therefore is competent therefor. In the Yoga Shāstra it is said that knowledge (Jñāna) which leads to and in its complete form is liberation is the characteristic of Sannyāsa, the renouncing life of the ascetic (Sannyāsi). The adornment (Bhūshana) of a Yati is knowledge which is to be given to the deserving only (Jñānam sannyāsalakṣhanam). By simply giving up action or ritual (Karma) one does not become an ascetic. Knowledge is realisation of the identity of Jīvātma and Paramātmā. Competency arises for Sannyāsa when all worldly desire is given up; when dispassion (Vairāgya) arises through the knowledge that all the universe is Brahman and therefore no part of it is an object of desire. He is a Yati and a

Deva who knows *Atmā* to be alone the self-illuminating (*Svaprakāsha*), attributeless (*Shūnya*), mass of Bliss (*Anandaghana*). *Agni Purāṇa* (ch. 161) says the fourth Ashrama is that which exhibits *Jñāna* and *Moksha* (*Jñānamokshādīdarshakam*). Such an one is self-controlled within (*Shānta*) and without (*Dānta*), a renouncer (*Uparata*) to whom all opposites whether of heat or cold, praise or blame are alike (*Titikshu*), self-centred (*Samāhita*) (See *Yatidharmanirnaya* II. 108.), an enjoyer with *Atmā* (*Atmarati*) whose play is with *Atmā* (*Atmakrida*), whose union is with *Atmā* (*Atmamithuna*) and whose bliss is *Atmā* (*Atmānanda*). *Maithuna* is coupling or union of any kind including the action of the lips in *Japa* and sexual union. The union of the *Yati* is within his body with the divine *Shakti* who is the spouse of *Atmā*. He is without "mineness" (*Nirmama*), egoity (*Nirahangkāra*) and seems to ordinary worldly folk (*Vishayātmā*) to be dumb (*Mūka*) and out of his mind (*Unmatta*), as in one sense he is. For he speaks not of this world and his mind is withdrawn therefrom and centred on the Bliss until it is merged therein. He is void both of desire (*Rāga*) and aversion (*Dvesha*) for he sees all things with equal eye (*Samadarshana*). For what he sees in them is not external form or quality but the one *Atmā* therein. He is forgiving (*Kshama*) and fearless for the knower of Brahman has nothing to fear. Fear springs from duality—which has gone. He cares not whether he lives or dies. He seeks not to live nor to die.—(See *Yatidharma* II 209 *et seq* and 215 citing 41 ch. of *Skanda Purāṇa*...*Jivitāṅg maraṅg vātha nābhikāṅkshat kvachit*: he should not wish to die or to live). He by renunciation (*Tyāga*) has content (*Santosha*) having like the tortoise withdrawn his limbs within himself, that is, those physical and mental functions in which desire inheres; and abides within the blissful Self. He must be the same to friend or foe being one and the same to all beings (*Samah sarveshu bhūteshu*) and be indifferent to honour and dishonour and careless of what the day or morrow may bring. ('He who is wise must be without care and not a hoarder for the morrow'—*upekshako sanchayiko munirjñāna samanvitah*—*Yatidharma* II. 209 *et seq.*) He is *Nirapeksha*, that is, without expectation (ib. 215) subduing in all ways his senses. He must have no greed. A pebble and a piece of gold are the same to him. (For what follows see *Yatidharmanirnaya* II 209 *et seq.*) Nor must he have pride (*Dambha*); and in such an one not even a hundred expiatory rites (*Prāyashchitta*) can expiate lewdness (*Lampatyā*). He must not seek to be honoured of men, speak words which displease or get angry with any one. He should avoid all disrespect, hurting the feelings of others and random talk. He thinks of himself as in everything (*Akhillasangsthita*) and must not cause hurt (*Hingsā*) to anything. It

is the Yati also who 'offers the other cheek'. But all men are not Yatis; therefore this Ashrama is not imposed on them.

There are ten kinds of Hingsā which are prohibited,—causing fear and trouble, pain to or hindering others, to draw blood, to act prompted by jealousy, to destroy the happiness of another, to excel, to stand in the way or obstruct others, confinement and any other form of action unfavourable and productive of hurt to others. (Udvegajananam, santāpajanam, ruddhakaranam, shonitotpatanam, pai-shunyakaranam, sukhāpanayanam, atikrama, sangrodhah, bandhah, viparīta karma.—(Yatidharmanirnaya II. 284).

It is said in the Vāyu Purāṇa that sacrifice (Yajna) is better than gift (Dāna), and spiritual striving and austerity (Tapas) than Yajna (or in the latter there are always material ingredients or Dravya and Tapas includes fasting and the like) but Sannyāsa (which involves Jñāna) is better than Tapas.—(Yatidharma, II- 108 *et seq.*). Therefore Jñāna is greater than all. The same Purāṇa says that Sannyāsa is the giving up of Karma (Sannyāsah karmano nyāsah). The meaning of this is that there is no Karma (action, ritual or otherwise,) when Sannyāsa has borne its fruit in Jñāna, that is, when the Sādhaka is liberated (Jīvanmukta). Below that stage there is an increasing surrender of Karma, only such Karma being retained as is appropriate for the fourth state. For all on this stage are not perfect and for them as explained later some form of Karma is necessary.

Competency for the fourth Ashrama consists in the four Sāadhanās known as discrimination (Viveka) between the eternal and non-eternal, dispassion (Vairāgya), that is, renunciation of all fruit whether in this or the next world, that is, on earth or in Heaven. He withdraws himself from the objects dear to each of the senses (Sarvendriya-pritīnivartaka—Yatidharma III. 45). A desire for liberation (Mumukshutva); and a desire to learn the Supreme Truth (Tattvajñāncechchhā)—(Yatidharma II. 108)—all his thinking should be about Atmā only (Adhyātmachintāgatamānasa).

He should contemplate the eternal Deva Nārāyaṇa who is Atmā. That Deva is without duality (Nirdvanda), without Egoity (Nirmama; Mamatvashūnya), is Peace (Shānta), beyond Māyā (Māyātīta), the Eternal (Sanātanam) in whom all things are (Paripūrṇa), the stainless (Amala), changeless (Avikāra), supreme Light (Parajyotiḥ), without beginning or end (anādyanta), the cause of worldly consciousness (Jagatcāitanyakāraṇa), the supreme attributeless consciousness (Jñānasvarūpa).—(Yatidharmanirnaya II. 209 *et seq.*).

The work of the Sannyāsin is the search to know Atmā and for this he should ever read the Upanishads and investigate the meaning of Veda (Markandeya Purāṇa 28 Ch. Yatidharma II

207 *et seq.*). At p. 215 of the last work the four acts (Karmāni) to be done are meditation (Dhyāna), purification (Shaucha), begging (Bhikshā), living solitarily (Ekānta shīlata). He should study the science of the self (Adhyātmikadarshana *ib.*) He must thus be Atmavidyāparāyana.—(See *ib.* III 247). The cause (Hetu) of knowledge is Shruti, Smriti, Purāna, commentaries (Bhāṣhya), explanation of Vaidik words (Vedānuvachanam) and sacrifice (Yajna), (Yatidharma II); but this last does not mean material sacrifice (Dravyayajna) but recitation, meditation, fasting, and so forth all of which are Yajna such as Japayajna, Dhyānayajna, Upavāsayajna. So again sexual continence (Brahmacharya) is a Yajna. (As to daily study of Veda and Vedānta see Yatidharma III, 45, 62, 97, 247, where he is spoken of as Vedābhyāsarata but not as to the ritual portion).

The Pūjā or worship of the Yati is not the ordinary external ceremonial worship but Yama, Niyama, Shaucha, Santosha, Tapah Svādhyāya, Asana, Prānāyāma, Japa, Dhairyya (Pratyāhara), Dhyāna (such as the meditation on Om, mental offering and the latter: that is, without the ordinary external ceremonial), Samādhi (*ib.* II, 212). He must thus be Atmavidyāparāyana (See *ib.* III 247). Prānāyāma is of two kinds with or without Mantra and Dhāyana, that is, Sagarbha and Agarbha. He practises the eight limbs of Yoga, the virtues of his state, devotion to Dharma with certain religious observances, posturo, breath control, restraint of senses, centering of the mind, meditation, communion. (Samādhi in Vedānta is Abhedena avasthānam, *i. e.*, the state of not being different from Brahman).

It is said that when the householder's skin begins to shrivel and his hair grows grey and when he sees the sons of his sons then he should go to the forest (Vānaprastha). He may be accompanied by his wife though they will not then cohabit; or if not she will be entrusted to the care of her children. No one should take up this life or that of the Ashrama which follows it in whom desirelessness (Vairāgya) has not arisen otherwise as the Purāna says there is likely to be a fall.—(See as to this Ashrama, p. 192 of Yatidharmanirnaya; and the authorities there cited such as Mahābhārata Rājadharmā Shāntiparva 66 Ch: Ashrama Upanishad; Vishnusanghitā ch. 95; Atrisanghitā: Prāyashchittavidhi and others.) Yadā manasi vairāgyam jātam sarveshu jantushu tadaiv sannyasod vidvān anyathā patito bhavet —(Brihannāradya Purāna, 25 Adhyāya). The life is one of austerity and Vedantic contemplation in which the world and its enjoyments are put behind without regret as things of the past. He must be ascetic (Brahmachāri) without sense of "mineness" (Mamata). The dress, life and food of the Grihastha is given up. Skin or old cloths and sometimes only the Kaupīna (a very exiguous loin cloth) were worn.

The hair is tangled (Jatā), the beard and nails uncut. He may at first live in a simple hut and then afterwards in the open, protected only by the trees of the forest. His couch is grass and the earth. He must be without other companions and not wander beyond the forest. Giving up all laziness and restricting sleep he must weaken his body by austerities. He must not eat meat nor drink wine nor even other food grown in the villages; but should restrict himself to forest nuts and fruits. If he eats both in the morning and evening he should cook but once so that the less time is taken up in this matter. He should bathe morning and evening. His food should be limited to a certain number (thus eight) of mouthfuls (Grāsa). This term (Grāsa) is defined as either the measure of a fowl's egg (Kukkutāṇḍa-pramāṇam) or so much as is capable of being taken at one time into the mouth (Yāvān vā pravishet mukham). There were also special austerities (Vrata) in the way of food, such as the four months' fast (Chāturmāsya), eating at night only (Naktāsī) or at intervals of one, two or three days; eating for three days in the morning, three in the evening, and then not at all (Prajāpatyavidhi), drinking only the water to be collected from leaves and plants and so forth. Thus subsisting on 6 spoonfuls (Pala) of water, then three of milk, then one of ghee is Taptakrichecharavrata: living for 21 days on a little water and 12 days fasting is Parākavrata. In heat of summer he should expose himself to the five fires (Panchatāpah), four around him, one above and in winter his cloth should be wet (Ardravāsah) so that he may feel the cold more acutely and learn to suffer the "opposites" with indifference. He should read Veda (Svādhyāya) and Upanishad and worship, for he is as yet not free from ritual Karma. He must do libation (Tarpana) to the fathers (Pitri) and worship (Pūjā) of Devatā with Charu (rice, milk and sugar) and Homa on Parva days. The first two are Pitri-yajna and Devayajna. He must also do Bhogayajna, that is, give food to men and animals though as he progresses in this Ashrama towards the last he is without fixed abode or sacrificial fire (Anagni). He then abandons the Guru fire and sets its flame in his Atmā. He must give alms to ascetics (Tapasvin) and be hospitable according to his means to all and succour the distressed. He must be externally (Dāntā) and internally (Shānta) controlled (Samāhita), friendly (Maitra) and have compassion (Dayā) for all beings (Sarvabhūtānukampaka). His life is one of spiritual energy (Tapas) which maintains the world since it is the virtue of men and Devas which upholds it. Tapas can accomplish what is difficult (dushchra), hard and far (Dūram), inaccessible (Durāpam). As the Vishnusanghitā says—Tapomūlamidam sarvam daivamānushajam jagat—(The whole world is based on the Tapas of Devas and men).

"He should be attached to the study of Vedānta, his senses controlled within and without, indifferent to the opposites, without selfishness or egoism. Free of lust and anger let him regard all beings as one." (Vedāntabhyāsanirataḥ śānto dānto jitendriyah nirdvando nirahankāro nirmamah sarvadā bhavet samādhigunāniryuktah kāmakrodhavyavarjitah.)

The Ashrama Upanishad speaks of four classes in this Ashrama viz., (1) Vaikhāṇasa (2) Udumbara (3) Bālakhilya (4) Phenapa, the distinctions however between which are not of sufficient importance to require detail here.—(They may be found at pp. 195 *et seq* of the Yatidharmanirnaya.)

(Concluded)

THE STRENGTH OF TRUTH AND FAITH

By M. Gnanasambandam, B.A.

Truth is nothing short of Eternal Existence—Knowledge—Bliss, the attainment of which is the aim of every thinking man and woman. It is the pure and perfect soul dwelling in every human body. Its chief characteristic is Anandam or happiness. This happiness is possible of achievement only by the spiritual nature of man and not by his material cravings. It is wrong to suppose that happiness is only in Heaven which is beyond this life. Heaven is in us if only we are heavenly in our thoughts and dealings. To be heavenly is to be absolutely truthful, which is the most blessed state of life. The instincts of Truth are implanted in each human being and it requires sincere effort and firm will to reach and remain in Truth.

"True happiness is his whose tranquil mind

Virtue has raised above the things below."

Manu says about Truth as follows :—

"The soul is its own witness, the soul is its own refuge;
Offend not thy conscious soul which is the supreme internal
Witness of man! The sinful have said in their hearts,
'No one sees us'. Yet the gods distinctly see them,
And so does the spirit within the breast."

The holy Bible says, "The lip of Truth shall be established for ever but a lying tongue is but for a moment." There is indeed nothing in man which is his own save his conscious Self or Soul. It is noteworthy that none is conscious of his own birth or death. Whatever is not within one's own personal knowledge is not direct testimony and it cannot be a fact so far as he is concerned. This

points to the soul not being subject to birth and death—only it changes bodies as bodies change garments. The immortality of the soul is proved by its not being conscious of birth and death experiences. It transcends time and space and caste and creed and always is.

" Small souls inquire, ' Belongs this man
To our own race, or class or clan ? '
But larger-hearted men embrace
As brothers all the human race."

The ancient Vedas deal with this deathless soul which is the true property of human beings. Those sages who lived soul-lives declared that all visible objects being in their nature destructible (destruction is nothing but change of name and form) the material world which is subject to changes is not the pure Truth. They did not say however that the world is untrue but they in their wisdom postulated the existence of the Cosmic Self (Paramatman) which though invisible is beyond the reach of name and form and is indestructible. Whether a man believes in God or not, he cannot but believe in the existence of his own self which perceives and knows the world. This they say is the Atman (individual self) which is an offshoot of Paramatman but subject to bondage (Avidya) unlike the Paramatman which is Infinite—all-knowing. If the action of the Invisible can be guessed approximately from that of the visible, the following observation may not be out of place. As the sun gives out warmth and light unsolicited by the world, and maintains and purifies by his essence every object that his rays touch without himself becoming affected in the process of purification, similarly, the Universal Being—the One who is in all space and in all time—generates consciousness and discretion in men making them feel and think and finally draws them into Himself by His own pleasure and grace without in any way becoming involved in their follies and vices. Each man's deliverance from his narrow egotism which is his own self-woven bondage is a pure matter of time and every one is bound in the long run to realize the impersonal Self or God by breaking asunder his own personal limitations after continuous journey through good and bad experiences and occasional visions of the inner light. The Shastras lay down that 'Nishkama Karma' or the doing of service with no other motive than the pure happiness which comes of every disinterested work leads to the purification of the mind. With mental purity comes concentration. With keen concentration comes true realisation, or the perfect contemplation of the glory of God.

Truth is not an imaginary thing for sweet conversation and pleasant dreaming. It is an abiding creative force. It not only informs but inspires, not only builds but guides, not only thinks but shapes

and elevates. The world is but the product of the thought of God or Paramatman who is Truth personified. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Truth gives and sustains without suffering loss or change. It is like the flame of a burning lamp which is not affected when it lights another lamp or any number of lamps. Knowledge is like flame and does not get diminished when it is imparted to others. The property of knowledge belongs to the knower who can distribute that property without incurring any loss. This never-decreasing property of knowledge which is the possession of the Soul is the Truth. "Truth is like a torch, the more 'tis shook, it shines." Nothing can be added to nor taken away from truth which can never be blotted out of existence as all things already known to man and still remaining unknown exist in it.

The Universal Self or Paramatman cannot successfully be brought fully into sects or religions in all His glory any more than the light and heat of the sun can be compassed in particular places and confined there permanently. It is open to each man to reflect and make his own religion and form his own ideals in calmness of spirit and in the light of proper understanding. True spiritual realisation cannot be gained by repeating some formulas and performing some ceremonies which may have their own places in the early stages of spiritual development. True religion which is a condition of the mind which ever remains God-conscious, can be attained only by a change of heart which is the outcome of sincere honest work and cheerful sacrifice. In fact it is the joyous mental attitude towards our immediate surroundings, our conscious relationship with God in all the moments of our daily life that really enlightens us. It is necessary to free ourselves from meaningless superstitions and uninspiring customs by not conforming to them and to boldly tear up and destroy all vanities and false sense of honour which are nothing but so many lifeless ties which keep us bound miserably in ignorance. A true and honest man is the noblest work of God. On the strength of what we truly and heartily believe to be right, we must act, irrespective of consequences, pleasurable or painful. We should maintain a happy mood of harmony with Nature which is the visible garment of God and which expresses His perfect Law. We should serve all creatures, tending plants and trees, feeding birds and animals and helping our neighbours by thought, speech and service and thereby we must learn to feel completely the Immeasurable Life which lives in the elements which serve us and in the luminous bodies overhead which guide our paths. Armed with the powers of self-restraint which is implied in the practice of benevolence to all we can get a glimpse of self-knowledge.

Endowed with self-knowledge we shall realise the Eternal forces of the great Life which are sympathy of life for life and universal love. It is this Universal love which sustains the worlds in perfect harmony and peace. To reach this great Life, one must necessarily pass through suffering and suffering is an impressive teacher silently moulding us in the right way. The bitterest suffering will be gladly borne if we are blessed with the consciousness of Truth revealing to us the spiritual nature of the work we do. Such a consciousness will take us above our ordinary life and adorn us with the dignity of the Eternal, transmuting our very suffering into a glorious and pleasant enjoyment.

In the heart in which the self merges completely in God's love, the personal pains and sorrows must lose their sting and become perfectly harmless. In such an extraordinary condition of mind lighted by God's love, Prahlada of old cheerfully bore all his excruciating pains even without a groan at the hands of his tyrant father. In a similar state of mind which is far above the reach of ordinary human life, Jesus, the Son of God, when bleeding on the cross prayed imploringly on behalf of his most wicked persecutors, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." If each and every subject living in a State must be presumed to know the law of the land, and cannot legally be excused for ignorance of the law, is it not necessary for every living man to know the law of God that good will come of good and only evil out of evil? In the face of this grand truth and law, Jesus pleaded in favour of his inexcusable persecutors. What else can be greater proof of divine love than this? Here was the greatest and noblest conception of the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The feeling that we are absolutely in God, our common Father and the true one, in all conditions of life and can have no existence apart from Him, must encourage us to face the different situations of life with the utmost resignation which is the result of undoubted faith in Him. Oh! What a mighty life-giving power it is even to contemplate for one moment that we have no place except in God who is everywhere! Jesus himself explained this truly by saying that the birds have nests, the foxes have holes, but the son of man has no place to rest his head (except in God). Prahlada also expressed the same thought when he answered his enraged father that there is no place where God is not present and that He exists even in the pillar which was pointed out to him by Hiranyakasipu. This is bliss, pure and true. This is the real sharing of that great Life. All else is sordid, mean and base. In solemn silence let us reflect and remain fixed in never-shaken faith and piety. It is by means of this alone that we can come to the knowledge of the ultimate goal. Let us therefore awake, arise and stop not till the goal of bliss is reached,

There is another aspect of Truth. God being Almighty, His cosmic will is not subject to change. God's will being in its nature absolute, man's duty is to love and respect God and bow before His will without a murmur trusting firmly that whatever comes to pass by His will is for his best. The world will not be upset by certain unexpected happenings nor by the viciousness of wicked persons any more than rotten apples can end the world by bad odour. Sri Krishna the divine teacher taught Arjuna the warrior prince when he refused to fight that he was merely an instrument in his hands and that everything is ordained by Him in his own way, but that when man begins to work with the idea that he himself is the sole doer he at once becomes bound by his own thought and feels miserable egotism. Against this kind of egotism which many presume to be responsible for the progress of the world, all the religions join together in the common prayer "Let God's will be done". Strength, love and light are needed to bring home to the mind of erring man the profound truth contained in the above holy prayer of mankind as a whole. It was erroneously at one time thought that man's prayer would change the will of God but the truth flashed on him with the increase of faith and devotion that it was the will of man that had to be modified and taught to adore the will of God because it was rightly recognised that the kindness and the severity of God both meant for the man of insight one and the same thing. Far higher than pain and pleasure which are the toys of men, lies the blessed throne of righteousness. In that lofty sense of righteousness which is the spiritual mightiness, man must find full reward of doing right.

It is a common experience that no man neglects to thank his brother man when he is given food and water and a flickering light at time of need but how few of us have thought of God and considered it our duty to thank Him for the abundant rains and fertile crops, for the glorious sun and the silvery moon? Although we daily see that God makes the sun shine on the earth folded in the darkness of the night, yet how few of us even dimly perceive that He graciously illumines our ignorant minds? Though we find that He sends sumptuous rains to save His creatures, both good and wicked, yet how few of us are able to feel that He similarly extends His definite mercy to every one of us who are living in ignorance of His laws? The All-merciful God saves and succours men despite their bad mentalities by taking them through several stages of experience and lands them finally on the shore of bliss and perfect knowledge. A recent inspired messenger of God in the person of Swami Rama Thirtha wrote truly, "If a man suffers from any want it is due to his own want of faith in God. It is far better for such a man to die than to live a miserable life

wanting in faith in the Creator." Yes, faith enters right into the soul while reason simply stands outside arguing and trying to convince.

With devotion and pure light, we must make our lives sublime and with hearts of faith and love we must clasp the feet of the Lord as children cling innocently to their mother's arms. Hanuman, through faith in Rama, crossed the vast ocean without a bridge. Irresistible is the power of faith! With faith in God we become the pure children of Divinity. Let us live in Truth and faith because,—

" The will is free

Strong is the soul and wise and beautiful

The seeds of God-like power are in us still

Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes if we will."

THE LARGER MEANING OF EDUCATIONAL METHOD

By Dr. G. S. Krishnayya, M.A., Ph. D. (Columbia)

The physician's method of treatment of his patient is determined by diagnosis of his case. So it must be with the teacher and his class. Diagnosis is the first step in method. The word 'diagnosis' is derived, we are told, from Greek forms which mean 'to know through or thoroughly'. We must know thoroughly the facts of the teaching situation before we can help pupils with their learning processes. If teachers attempted diagnosis as a method they would not be so often lost in dealing with cases of obstinate disobedience or of little children who write '3' and '7' backwards.

Diagnosis implies also judgment, or evaluation of the natural and acquired tendencies and the needs which they are likely to satisfy. Not all impulses are of equal worth. We have also to know what impulses count most at a given stage of life, as well as to know which have largest present strength. The eager enthusiasm of the adolescent for all that is new in style and in manners is the reflect of an impulse that leads to the rapid socialisation of the individual and his free and easy incorporation into the world of adult interests and activities. Knowing the significance of the impulse we can pardon some of its crudities and excrescences and assist it to develop in right lines.

If all that had to be taught was certain subjects—arithmetic, reading, writing,—it would suffice to know what procedure would most efficient! get them into the heads and hands of these ignorant candidates. But if it is true that the purpose of education is the changing

of conduct, and if it is true that the school should concern itself with the whole child, then it would seem that the problem of method is deserving of some more thought. Hitherto, appraisal of the effect of class-room procedure has generally been concerned with only a part of what usually takes place. "Has the child learnt multiplication?" The annual or periodical examination answers the question. But what of the total effect upon the child of this class-room procedure through which he is supposed to learn multiplication? During that time the child was forming attitudes with relation to multiplication, arithmetic, teacher, school, himself and so on. He was learning several things besides multiplication. His character was being built by his action and reaction with his environment. 'Well, if all arithmetic is of this type, I do not mind learning it'; 'I never thought arithmetic could be as bad as this'; 'No more arithmetic for me';—these are expressive of what is more than can be measured by the usual examination. In fact so impossible is it to be forming likes and dislikes that it would be safe to say that the reader is even now forming attitudes as to whether to go on in the same old way or to venture on a definite departure!

The fact is that there are concomitant learnings as well as primary learnings. The latter are those that have to do directly with the subject in hand,—multiplication, sewing, gardening, poetry, etc.,—and the former with the judgment of the worth of the work being carried on, and with the relationship to the factors involved. Concomitant learning is a by-product of school activity. In any school-room procedure the pupils are actually engaged in making multiple responses to the multiple stimuli of their environment. Willy nilly, some habits are being strengthened, and some appreciation of the good and the beautiful, or satisfaction with falsehood and evasion, is being provided.

What sort of a person a boy will be is determined by the attitudes, habits and appreciations which are being built up through the method—in this larger sense—adopted by the school. This recognition that while a particular subject is being taught certain other learnings are going, more than doubles the possibilities and responsibilities of the school.

SELECTIONS FROM THE ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

BALAKANDA : CHAPTER V

AHALYA'S PRAYER

अहो कृतार्याऽस्मि जगन्निवास ते
पादाब्जसंलम्परजःकणादहं ॥
स्पृशामि यन्पद्मजशंकरादिभि—
विमृग्यते रंधितमानसैः सदा ॥ ४३ ॥

43. Ah ! I have been blessed, Oh the Lord Supreme, by the touch of a grain of dust of Thine lotus feet. I have touched those lotus feet which, with distressed heart, are ever sought after by Sankara (Siva), Brahma and others.

अहो विचित्रं तव राम चेष्टितं
मनुष्यभावेन विमोहयन् जगत् ॥
चलस्यजलं चरणादिवर्जितः
संपूर्णानन्दमयोऽतिमायिकः ॥ ४४ ॥

44. Ah ! How wonderful are Thine doings, Oh Rama ! Though Thou art devoid of feet and art omnipresent, ever-blissful and above Maya yet Thou deludest the world with Thine human form by moving about in infinite variety of ways.

यत्पादपंकजपरागपविलगात्रा
भागीरथीभवविरिंचिमुखान्पुनाति ॥
साक्षात्स एव ममदृग्विषयोयदास्ते
किं वार्यते मम पुराकृतभागधेयं ॥ ४५ ॥

45. How should I describe my meritorious deeds done in the past when He (the Lord),—by the dust of whose feet Bhaghirathi (the Ganges) (herself) being sanctified is purifying Siva, Brahma and others—has manifested himself and has made himself perceivable by me ?

मर्त्यवितारे मनुजाकृतिर्हरिं
रामाभिधेयं रमणीयदेहिनं ॥
धनुर्धरं पद्मविशाललोचनं
भजामि नित्यं न परान्भजिष्ये ॥ ४६ ॥

46. Sri Hari who has incarnated Himself on earth in the form of a beautiful human being known as Sri Rama of broad lotus eyes and adorned with bow—Him ever do I worship and none else.

यत्पादपंकजरजः श्रुतिभिर्विमृग्यं
यन्नाभिपंकजभवः कमलासनश्च ॥
यन्नामसारसिक्रो भगवान्पुगारि—
स्तं रामचन्द्रमनिशं हृदि भावयामि ॥ ४७ ॥

47. Ever do I contemplate Thee in my heart, Oh Sri Rama !—
Thee the dust of whose lotus feet is sought after by the Vedas, Thee
from whose lotus-navel Brahma was born and in the sweetness of
whose name-essence Lord Siva remains ever inebriated.

यस्यावतारचर्गतानि विरिञ्चिलोके
गायन्ति नागदमुखा भवपद्मजायाः ॥
आनन्दजाश्रुपरिपिक्तकुचाप्रसीमा
वागीश्वरीच तमहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ४८ ॥

48. I seek refuge in him the life incidents of whose incarnations
are sung in Brahmaloṇa by sages such as Narada and by Siva,
Brahma and other gods and in singing which (i.e., the life incidents)
the nipples of the breasts of Sarasvati (the Goddess of speech or learn-
ing) are drenched with tears of joy.

सोऽयं परात्मा पुरुषः पुराण
एषस्त्वं ज्योतिरनेतद्वायः ॥
मायातनुं लोकविमोहनीयां
धत्ते परानुग्रहं रामः ॥ ४९ ॥

49. This ¹ is the supreme, ancient Being, the self-effulgent, the
Infinite and the Primal cause that hast, for the good of the world,
taken the all-enchanting illusory form ² of Sri Rama.

[Note : 1. She is referring to the form of Sri Rama visible before her eyes.
2. As distinguished from the form of ordinary creatures that are made
of the five elements].

अयं हि विश्वोद्भवसंयमाना—
मेकः स्वमायागुणविवितो यः ॥
विरिञ्चिविष्णुवीश्वरनामभेदान
धत्ते स्वतन्त्रः परिपूर्ण आत्मा ॥ ५० ॥

50. This is the one self-dependent and perfect Atman, the cause
of the origin, preservation and destruction of the universe and which
being reflected in its own Maya consisting of the Gunas goes by the
various names of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

[Note : 1. Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas.]

नमोऽस्तु ते राम तवाङ्घ्रिपंकजम्
श्रियाधृतं वक्षसि लालितं प्रियात् ॥

आक्रान्तमेकेन जगत्रयं पुरा

ध्येयं मुनीन्द्रैर्भिमानवर्जितैः ॥ ५१ ॥

51. Salutations unto Thine lotus feet, Oh Sri Rama!—the feet which Lakshmi (the Goddess of prosperity) holds in her bosom and caresses with fondness: in days long gone by, with one of which feet Thou coverest the three worlds and which (feet) (again) are meditated upon by sages devoid of egoism.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

INDIA'S DREAM OF INDEPENDENCE

The Indian National Congress has broken away from its old traditions and has declared 'Independence' to be its creed. But why did India lose her independence in the past is a very interesting question at this juncture when her sons have again begun to dream of it. The reason will be very clear if we compare the histories of India and Europe. Perhaps there is no feature in Indian history that is so remarkable as the ease with which big empires have crumbled to pieces before a rebel leader or a foreign invader. These empires were for the most part forced associations of various peoples who were always left conscious of their differences. The rulers cared very little to share the responsibilities of Government with the people, or to establish common points of contact with them by a system of universal education. The result was that the people lived completely detached from the State and when dangers threatened the latter they did not feel it as any concern of theirs. When foreign invaders attacked the country they were faced by the king and his standing army, but the consciousness of danger seldom raised any mighty national opposition. The inevitable consequence was that when the king's army received one or two defeats and was annihilated, there remained nothing to stand in the way of the invaders, and the people tamely submitted to the new rule as they did to the former, often quite oblivious even of the fact that the Government of the country had changed hands. But unlike this the history of Europe shows instances of countries surviving successive defeats and foreign invasions which seemed for a time to blot them out of existence. A France may be crushed and partly conquered by a Henry V, but at a point the national enthusiasm rises up and sweeps away the conqueror before its mighty force. So also a Spain may for a time be wholly conquered and occupied by the Moors, but the Spanish nation that survives in the mountain fastnesses remains unsubdued and eventually succeeds in expelling the foreigners from the fatherland. A Napoleon may crush the powers of Europe in a series of brilliant victories, but yet we see the wonderful spectacle that the nations remain unsubdued and after persistent attempts humble the pride of the world's greatest general. It is an astonishing fact that the national opposition of even such a small country as Holland could successfully resist the long series of aggressive attempts on its liberties by the great and powerful Hapsburg and Bourbon families. The secret of this undying vitality of countries in Europe seems to be the fact that the masses were in a way made to feel for the country. Although the modern form of democratic Government did not exist in

Europe in those days, yet the people were in certain ways taken into partnership with them in matters of administration by the rulers, and were made to feel that their success or failure was interlinked with the well-being of the people. Moreover, there was the great Catholic Church in its full vigour acting as an organisation for the spread of universal education. Through its functionings the classes and the masses, though separated in many matters, were given certain common interests and traditions to stand upon and were saved from developing that spirit of exclusiveness and ideas of privilege even in sharing the Lord's love, which became so marked a feature of India's social and religious organisation. India has to learn this great lesson that any form of stable Government can be formed and managed by Indians themselves in this country only when they establish a greater co-operation between the classes and the masses. A living interest in the State has to be created in the minds of the people and this can be accomplished only by bringing them into greater contact with the State and by an efficient system of universal education which could bridge over the gulf that exists at present in the cultural level of the classes and the masses, of the educated and the illiterate of modern India. At the same time religion, especially Hinduism, has to throw open its doors to scriptural learning and spiritual progress to all people without any invidious distinction of caste or creed. For a spiritual democracy actualised at least in rituals and forms of worship shall furnish a solid foundation for a social and political democracy in India.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans : by the Editors of the Shrine of Wisdom, London ; price 2sh.

The present book contains an English translation in verse form of the Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans and a commentary thereon. Although the authorship of the verses is doubtful, they certainly express the quintessence of the moral teachings of Pythagoras. The moral precepts embodied in these verses form an excellent epitome of the rules of conduct that should form a part and parcel of the life of every pious man, and are calculated to confer happiness here and hereafter on their faithful observers. They are beautiful both for their sublime wisdom as well as the universality of their outlook.

Sir, Teach Me Brahman : by Father J. F. Pessein, Catholic Mission Press, Pondicherry.

This small book is a clever missionary attempt at bringing home to the minds of the Hindu the shortcomings of his religion and the superiority of Christianity over it. In place of condemning the Hindu's faith as a whole, the learned writer admits that there are certain truths, which the Hindu holds in common with the Christians of the Catholic fold, but proceeds to add that Christianity has in it other truths concerning the nature of God like the doctrine of Trinity, which are not found in Hinduism and without a belief in which there is no possibility of salvation for the human soul. He further gives an account of the chief features of Christ's life, teachings and personality along with testimonies of eminent men, both Indian and European, to his greatness, and concludes by saying that it would not do for

Hindus to admit Christ as one of the Avataras and profess him and follow his teachings privately, but that they should accept him as the only Son of God and declare themselves publicly as his followers. He also gives a catalogue of the principal articles of faith held by the Catholic Church.

The book is, we should say, very misleading in many respects. The author's presentation of the resemblances between the Hindu and Christian religions is likely to misguide Hindus who have not made a proper study of their religion, for most of them are unreal and cannot stand scrutiny. In order to bring about these fancied resemblances the author does not hesitate to misinterpret the doctrines of Hinduism in the most arbitrary fashion and to shift his ground from Advaita to Dvaita and vice versa as convenience suits him. The Christian doctrine of Trinity, as the author has interpreted it, may be a special feature of Christianity but we feel sure that few Hindus will find any fascination for the "mystery" that surrounds it or the "splendour" that the author attributes to it. The very statement that the doctrine of Trinity is an explanation of Brahman as He is in Himself would be jarring to the ear of an Advaitist who holds that the nature of the Supreme Being in his essence is beyond the ken of human thought and much less of human language and is realisable only by complete identification in the Nirvikalpa state when the individual mind and personality have vanished. We perfectly agree with the author in his appreciation of the personality of Jesus Christ, and few Hindus would refuse to do honour to his blessed person; but when the author says that he is the only Son of God or that there is no salvation without this belief or that Christianity contains the whole truth no Hindu can suppress a smile of pity at the exclusiveness and fanaticism of the Christian Father.

Mental Healing : by K. L. Sarma, The Nature Cure Publishing House, Pondicherry ; price 2 annas.

The booklet may be considered an original writing on the subject. The author considers the usually recognised methods of mental healing like autosuggestion and suggestive healing as unscientific and unnatural. According to him the correct method of mental healing consists in a truly religious life which is the same as complete resignation to the divine will. He shows by a clear analysis of the idea of resignation how it can act as an aid to nature cure. It is written in simple and lucid English and contains many important principles of religion and health.

Pranayama : by K. L. Sarma ; The Nature Cure Publishing House, Pondicherry ; price 2 annas.

The author gives in this brochure the elementary principles of Pranayama which forms an important part of his scheme of nature cure. His exposition of the subject is very scientific and contains cautious directions to remove the dangers that are generally attendant on the practice of Pranayama without the direct guidance of an expert. We recommend the book to all who are interested in the subject.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAY OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The Ninety-Fifth Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna comes off on Sunday the 2nd March, 1930. The Anniversary celebration shall be held at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras on Sunday the 9th March, 1930. The usual feeding of the Poor-Narayanans will form the special feature of the function on the Anniversary Day.

BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT THE R. K. MATH, MADRAS

The Sixty-Eighth Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was as usual celebrated with great eclat at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, on the 26th of January, 1930. In the spacious hall of the Math a large size photograph of the Swami was placed on a raised platform tastefully decorated with ferns and rose garlands. Bhajana parties coming from various quarters of the city filled the Asharma premises with the soul-stirring notes of their devotional music to the great edification of the large number of devotees who began to assemble at the Math from early hours in the morning. As usual in the noon took place the feeding of the poor-narayanans in the R. K. Mission Students' Home premises. This year over 200 poor people were sumptuously fed, and about 500 devotees who had assembled at the Math for taking part in the celebration received Prasadam. Next, there was a Harikatha which was very much enjoyed by the assembled devotees. In the evening a meeting was held under the presidency of the Hon'ble Dewan Bahadur Justice Sir C. V. Kumarswami Sastriar. Mr. N. Subramanya Aiyar, B.A., L.T., of the Students' Home first delivered a lecture in Tamil depicting the spiritual genius of the Swami, and showing how his life was a synthetic fulfilment of the ideals of spiritual life as embodied in the Hindu Scriptures. This was followed by an eloquent address in English by Mr. I. Narayana Menon, M.A., B. Litt. (Oxon), Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, Madras, on "The Message of Swami Vivekananda to the Modern Conscience". In the course of his speech he pointed out those features of the Swami's message that chiefly interested the secularly minded men of modern times. He specially emphasised upon the new interpretation that the Swami has given to the ancient Indian ideal of renunciation which according to the Swami does not mean a sort of quietism as it is wrongly understood by many, but implies active service of humanity and culture of self abnegation. He also referred to the Swami's ideals about the harmony of religions and the education of the Indian masses. The Chairman, in the course of his learned and inspiring address, reminded the audience of the Swami's repeated exhortations to his countrymen to cultivate strength, physical as well as mental, and said that the only sure way of progress for India was to follow the teachings of that dynamic personality. The meeting terminated with the usual vote of thanks to the Chairman and the speakers. The proceedings of the day came to a close with Mangalarathi and the distribution of Prasadam at 8 P.M.

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY, PORTLAND, OREGON, U.S.A.

The annual meeting of the local Vedanta Society held on the 3rd December, 1929, was one of the most enjoyable since the Society was first started four years ago. It served the double purpose of

celebrating the anniversary of the Society and also establishing the work in the newly decorated rooms of the Wheeldon Annex.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. Ralph Thorn, President of the Portland Organisation. The programme committee had arranged a varied programme of music, readings and talks. One of the most enjoyable numbers was a description, by Swami Vividishananda, of some of his experiences on a pilgrimage to Manas Sarovar and Kailash in Tibet.

The meeting was viewed by many of those present as a farewell party to Swami Prabhavananda, who is departing soon to continue his work in Hollywood, California. However, in an intimate talk to his students during the serving of refreshments, Swami Prabhavananda said they should not look upon his leaving as a farewell, since he would continue to have an active interest in the Portland Centre, and would no doubt be with this group from time to time in future.

The new quarters are of ample proportions, attractive and comfortable, and should serve the Society well during the coming winter months. Considerable thought has been given to the possibility of building a new home for the Vedanta Society in Portland and the possibility will continue to receive the thoughtful consideration of the Board of Trustees.

The love and good wishes of the entire Society go with Swami Prabhavananda to his new field, while their loyal support and spirit of co-operation remain with Swami Vividishananda.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT THE R. K. ASHRAMA, RAJKOT

The holy occasion of Christ's nativity was celebrated with great eclat at Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot. About two hundred people took part in the celebration. The function began with a song by a Christian devotee followed by an interesting lecture in English by Swami Iswarananda in which the Swami showed with the help of quotations the resemblance of the Gospel of Christ with the message of the Bhagavad Gita. Then Mr. H. N. Pandya, a leading Vakil of Rajkot, addressed the audience in Gujarati and emphasised the fact that Christ's message was nothing but an echo of Vedanta. The function came to a close with a short speech from the chair and the distribution of prasadam.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION (CEYLON BRANCH)

The work of the R. K. Mission in Ceylon has of late rapidly expanded, and a number of educational institutions have already been established at Jaffna, Trincomalli and Batticaloa. The Ceylon Branch of the R. K. Mission in India had been experiencing many legal difficulties in the effective transaction of its business. To remove them the Ceylon Branch of the Mission applied to the Government of Ceylon to get it formally incorporated by an Act of the Govt. We are glad to announce that this was done by an Ordinance passed in the Ceylon Legislative Council and it received the sanction of the Governor on the 17th of July 1929. According to the Ordinance the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch), as the Association is styled, will hereafter be administered by a separate Board of Management, consisting of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and other members numbering not more than 36 nor less than 12. The Ordinance, however, provides that all rules and resolutions other than those relating to finance or property made by the Board of management shall be subject to the approval of the President of the R. K. Mission at Belur, and that except so far as is provided in the Ordinance

any dispute or doubt as to any matter affecting the principles or policy of the Ramakrishna Mission shall be referred to the Governing Body of the Mission in India whose decision thereon shall be final.

BHANDARKAR ORIENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, POONA

The report of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute for the year ending with March 1929 shows a creditable record of work done in the cause of Oriental learning. The report shows in separate sections the work turned out by the various departments of the Institute. The Mss. Department has a collection of 20,000 Sanskrit manuscripts which are freely lent out to scholars all over the world. The Mss. Library was inspected by a special Government Officer whose report shows that there was not even a single case of a manuscript being lost. The Library Department completed the work of carefully arranging and cataloguing both the R. G. B. Library and the Institute's own Library of printed books. No less creditable has been the activity of the Research Department which, although of only two years' standing, has won ungrudging recognition from the public press and from the student world in general. The number of students regularly attending the class has increased from 9 to 14, and the number of lectures given, from 114 in 1927-28 to as many as 212 during the year under report. The Publication Department has actually issued three volumes in the course of the year under report including among them the valuable *Nyaya Kesha*, 3rd Edition, pp. 1136. Several other works in the press are in various stages of progress, the pages printed during the year under report being 1276. The Mahabharata Department which has undertaken the publication of a critical edition of that great epic has put forth two fascicules, besides completing the average collation of two lacs of verse-units. It is however a matter of keen disappointment that the financial position of the undertaking continues to be as unsatisfactory as ever, the outstanding deficit of the Department having gone up from Rs. 11,500 to Rs. 13,500. The Sales Branch of the Institute has increased its total sales from Rs. 6,490-10-6 in 1927-28 to Rs. 7,791-12-3 during the year under report.

The general financial position of the Institute has improved by about Rs. 4,000 as is evident from the statement of accounts and of assets and liabilities appended to the report. But this slight improvement is mainly due to the economy and the efficiency of the general administration. The outstanding liability of Rs. 13,500 with which the Mahabharata section is confronted is a matter of anxious concern for the management, while the inadequacy of funds makes it necessary for the Institute to put off the carrying out of many schemes of admitted urgency connected with the improvement and extension of its buildings. The sort of work that the Institute is doing is of immense importance to Indian culture and therefore deserves the liberal patronage of the princes and people of this country. It will indeed be a blot on India's reputation if an undertaking like this suffers for want of funds.

AN APPEAL OF THE R. K. ASHRAMA, SHELLA, KHASI HILLS

At the instance of a few Khasi friends some monks of the Ramakrishna Mission started educational works in these hills in 1924. The object of this movement has been to present to our Khasi friends the fundamentals of true Indian culture as evinced in the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It is

needless to say that these great men exhorted people to rise superior to narrow sectarianism by drawing their inspiration from the Vedanta Philosophy which has a universal appeal.

The work has expanded steadily and at present there are two Middle English, six Lower Primary and three night schools; nearly 300 boys and girls are reading in those schools; two boarding houses are maintained, one at the Ashrama quarters at Sholla and the other at Sunamganij (Sylhet) where six boys are reading at the High English school. In the Ashrama and other localities weekly classes are held for adults and lantern lectures are occasionally arranged. The publication of non-sectarian religious literature and school books in the Khasi language has also been taken in hand. The needs of the sick and poor of all sects are also being attended to for which a stock of homeopathic and biochemic medicines has been kept. All these works are conducted by three monastic and twelve voluntary workers (Bengali and Khasi).

For the management and expansion of the above mentioned work a Committee has been formed at Shillong which has undertaken all responsibilities in this connection. In order to run the work efficiently and successfully the Committee is now anxious to raise funds for the following purposes for which they appeal to the generous public of all creeds and colour for sympathy and co-operation and for monetary contributions for the noble cause of awakening in the people of these hills the consciousness that they are, in common with the people of the plains, the inheritors of the glorious past and the makers of future India.

Our needs are as follows :—

(1) Monthly recurring expenditure of Rs. 300 for the existing institutions.

(2) Construction of a Students' Home and Ashrama for the workers at Shillong which is estimated to cost about Rs. 10,000.

(3) Construction and re-construction of the schools and boarding houses at the existing centres in the interior of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the opening of new centres at other places for which requests are being received frequently. The cost of construction is estimated to be Rs. 10,000 for the present.

(4) Publication of books at a cost of about Rs. 2,000.

Any help in cash or kind will be thankfully received and acknowledged through the Press by the Secretary to the Committee. Donors contributing Rs. 1,000 or more will be at liberty to suggest the perpetuation of the memory of their relatives and friends by having the schools, boardings and Ashramas named after them.

Sd. Birendra Kumar Mazumdar, Secretary to the Committee, Laban, Shillong. Sd. M. Sen Gupta, M. A., Dy. Comptroller of Assam (President to the Committee). Sd. Roy Bahadur Radhanath Phukan, Director of Agriculture and Industries, Registrar of Co-operative Societies and Registrar of village authorities. Sd. K. Manik, Siim Myllem (King of Myllem State), Khasi Hills. Sd. J. N. Chakrabatty, B. A., M. S. A. (Cornel), M. R. A. S. (Eng.), Dip. in Agri. Deputy Director of Agriculture, Lower Assam Valley Districts Circle. Sd. Jogidhon Roy, Ex. Wahadadar, Shella State, Khasi Hills. Sd. Swami Prabhananda in charge of The Ramakrishna Ashram, Shella, Khasi Hills.

THE VEDANTA KESARI.

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER

ॐ

नास्या धर्मं न वसुनिचये नैव कामोपभोगे

यद्यद्भव्यं भवतु भगवन्पूर्वकर्मनिरूपं ।

एतत्प्रार्थ्यं मम बहुमतं जन्मजन्मांतरेऽपि

त्वत्पादांभोरुहयुगगता निश्चला भक्तिरस्तु ॥

दिवि वा भुवि वा समास्तु वासो

नरके वा नरकांतक प्रकाशं ।

अवधीरितशारदागविंदौ

चरणौ ते मरणेऽपि चिंतयामि ॥

Lord, naught do I care for Dharma, or wealth or enjoyment of the objects of desire. Let what may fall to my lot according to my previous Karma. But this do I earnestly beg of Thee that I be endowed with love unshaken for the lotus of Thy feet in this life as well as in lives to come.

Let me be placed, O Lord, in heaven or on earth or in hell as it pleaseth Thee. I shall even in death think of Thy feet which (in beauty) surpass the lotus blossoms of the autumnal season.

MUKUNDAMALA

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

THE MASTER'S VISIT TO THE RESIDENCE OF SRIJUT

JAYGOPAL SEN

II

THE HOUSEHOLDER'S LIFE AND GOD-REALISATION. THE WAY.

Sri Ramakrishna : Did you listen to the song ? It says, — ' Put up the hedge of the name of Mother Kali and the crop will not be tampered with.' Take refuge with the Lord and you will get everything that you want. ' That strong fence of the name of the Divine Mother even the King of Death does not dare to approach.' It is indeed a strong fence!

" If you can attain God, the world shall not appear to be unreal. He who has realised Him sees that He alone has become Jiva and Jagat (soul and universe). Look upon every one as God. When you feed your children think you are feeding the Lord. Regard your father and mother as Divine and serve them. In the case of men leading the householder's life after realising God, there is rarely any physical relation with the wife. Both the husband and the wife look upon each other as a fellow devotee. They speak of God, engage themselves in topics pertaining to God. They serve those who are devoted to God. Recognising the Lord in every being they render service unto Him."

Neighbour : But, sir, such husbands and wives are not to be found.

Sri Ramakrishna : There are such persons, but they are very rare, and worldly people cannot recognise them. But to be like that both the husband and the wife must be good. And this is possible if both of them have got the taste of Divine Bliss. This means a special grace of God. Otherwise, there may be always differences between the husband and the wife, and one of them may have to stand aloof from the other. If there is a want of harmony between the two, it may become the source of great troubles. The wife may be complaining day and night,—' Why did my father give me away in marriage here ? I am not able to get good food either for myself or for my children. I cannot procure good dress either. And, a single piece of ornament I

* Translated from M's diary originally published in Bengali.

have not received.' Addressing the husband she may say,—'In what a state of great happiness you have kept me ! And closing your eyes you are always thinking of God ! Please do give up all this sheer madness !'

Devotee : Yes, sir, there are indeed such obstacles. And further, the sons may perhaps be disobedient. Besides, there may be many other troubles also. Now, what is the way out, sir ?

Sri Ramakrishna : It is very hard for one to practise spiritual disciplines, living in the world. Many indeed are the obstacles. And these need not be recounted to you. There are disease, grief and poverty. Besides, it may be, the wife is discordant, and the sons disobedient, stupid and obstinate.

" But still there is a way out. One should now and then retire into solitude, engage oneself in prayer, and strive for the realisation of God."

Neighbour : Should one give up one's home ?

Sri Ramakrishna : Not for good. Whenever you find leisure retire into some solitary place for a day or two. During that period see that you do not have any connection with the world, that you do not talk on worldly matters with the men of the world. Live either all alone or in the company of Sadhus (holy men).

Neighbour : Sir, how to recognise a true Sadhu ?

Sri Ramakrishna : He whose heart and soul are merged in God is a Sadhu. He who has renounced the objects of lust and greed is a Sadhu. A real Sadhu does not look upon women with the worldly eye. He always remains aloof from them ; and if he happens to come near them, he looks upon them as embodiments of the Divine Mother and worships them as such. A Sadhu constantly thinks of God, and does not talk of anything else. He serves all beings knowing that the Lord dwells in them all. These are in short the characteristics of a Sadhu.

Neighbour : Is it necessary to remain in solitude always ?

Sri Ramakrishna : Haven't you seen trees on the road side ? They are to be hedged round so long as they are young. Otherwise goats and cattle will eat them up. But when the tree grows big and the trunk becomes thick it does not stand in need of a fencing any more. Then even if you tie an elephant to it it will not break. You will have no more anxiety and fear if you can grow strong like the trunk of the tree. First try to

get Viveka (discrimination). Break open the jack fruit after smearing your hand with oil, and then the milky exudation of the fruit will not stick to your hands.

Neighbour: Sir, what is meant by Viveka (discrimination)?

Sri Ramakrishna: It means that God alone is Sat or real, and everything else is Asat or unreal. Sat means eternal, and Asat ephemeral. The person who has got discrimination knows that God alone is true and everything else is false. With the dawn of discrimination there arises in men the desire to know God. So long as one loves the unreal, loves physical comfort, honour, and wealth, one does not feel inclined to know God who is Reality Itself. It is only when one comes to realise the distinction between the real and the unreal that one desires to search for God.

“ Just listen to a song :—

“ Come, Oh my soul, let us go out for a walk. Let us gather the four fruits* lying at the feet of the wish-yielding tree †.

Of thy two wives, Worldliness and Unworldliness, take Unworldliness along with thee. And ask her son Discrimination (Viveka) about the highest truth

When, Oh my soul, art thou going to lie in the abode of Blessedness with Purification and Defilement alike by thy side? Thou wilt realise my Divine Mother only when all the difference between the two co-wives will pass away.

Do thou drive away thy Father Egotism and Mother Ignorance. If thou art dragged into the pit of passion, do thou cling to the post of fortitude.

Tie to a worthless post the two goats of worldly virtue and vice. If they prove troublesome, kill them with the sword of Knowledge.

Admonish the children of Worldliness, thy first wife, from a safe distance. Should they not obey thee, drown them in the ocean of true wisdom.

Prasad (the Psalmist) saith, “ If, Oh my soul, thou wouldst act thus, thou wilt be able to render a good account of thyself to the God of Death. And, then, O my child, my beloved, my idol, thou wilt indeed be one after my heart.”

Sri Ramakrishna: With the dawn of unworldliness, there comes discrimination, then the thought of the highest truth arises in the mind. Next the mind wants to wander at the feet of the Divine Mother who may be likened to the wish-yielding tree. And on going there, on approaching God, you may gather, and that easily, the four fruits—virtue (Dharma), wealth (Artha), objects of pleasure (Kama), and liberation (Moksha) that are lying there, as it were. On realising God, one may get, if he wants, not only liberation but also virtue, wealth and objects of pleasure—all that serve the purpose of the world.

* Dharma (virtue), Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasure) and Moksha (liberation).

† Ka. pa 'Yriksha—a tree in heaven believed to grant everything the worshipping prays for.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA—THE PROPHET OF HARMONY

It is a self-evident fact that a nation functions well only when mighty souls are born in the land and infuse a new life and vigour into its organic being and thereby add greater momentum to the course of its development. It is the consecrated lives of such eminent figures that enrich the soul of a nation and carry it forward to its destined goal. And in such a process of evolution different ages witness different forces contributing to the fulness of its life and thought. A Sri Krishna or a Buddha, a Sankara or a Ramanuja, a Chaitanya or a Nanak comes not merely as an accident but as a natural sequence in the course of the gradual fulfilment of the cultural idealism of the nation. But very few can realise the deep import of the advent of such souls whose silent and unostentatious lives of self-abnegation constitute the real wealth of the people. The advent of Sri Ramakrishna is not as such to be deemed an exception in any way. He stands out before humanity as a prophet of harmony and peace in the full splendour of his spiritual realisation. But the world is yet to wait for centuries before it can ascend to the fullest apprehension of the spiritual genius of this dynamic personality. The advent of such a soul is significant in ways more than one; it has its national as well as international bearing, and its importance is hardly realised when it is studied without an eye to the spirit of the times and the effect it produces on the trend of human thought and action. The nation in which he is born is quickened into a self-conscious organism with the unfoldment of its hidden treasure before it, and it naturally seeks a reformulation of its life-principles in the light of the spiritual contribution of this shining genius, and attunes itself anew to the central symphony of its inner being. The rest of humanity cannot escape the overpowering force of such a spiritual impact and consciously or unconsciously begin to absorb into their systems of thought the explosive ideas of such a unique soul for a further enrichment of their life and culture. A Christ or a Sri Ramakrishna thus comes as a response to the throbbing aspirations of the age,—bringing in his train a fund of creative ideas needed to shape the destiny of mankind—and imparts a new orientation to their outlook on life. In fact such a mighty

soul is an invaluable asset to the whole human race, and the glory and beauty of such a life is revealed only with the roll of years.

But very often men are carried away by the external grandeur of human activity and ignore the inner essence that flows into a variety of forms. It is only the thinking minds that pause and attempt to go beyond the outer crust and discover the sacred fount that fills and informs the whole being of a great soul. Very few now feel curious to know what shaped and moulded the life of a Buddha or of a Christ. Ordinarily men are satisfied if their object of adoration is apotheosised or is able to compel the homage of the successive generations of mankind. Time also plays its usual role and surrounds such souls with some mystic halo that completely screens from human view the creative forces of their life. Thus the danger of misunderstanding the greatness of these giant personalities in the dim light of the varied forms their ideas assume in the process of expansion can hardly be exaggerated. Even Buddha and Christ would stand confounded if they are to come down on earth to-day, to see how their lives have been travestied and their teachings caricatured. No wonder then that the deeper import of the life of Sri Ramakrishna would also in some unknown future be lost sight of, and humanity would try to interpret his life and teachings according to their limited standard of intellectual vision, their tastes and aptitudes. The life of Sri Ramakrishna with its many facets is indeed a baffling mystery to many a superficial thinker. "To some Sri Ramakrishna is a victim to 'self-created neurosis', and his 'trance-experiences' are 'of a very low order' and most of his visions are a direct outcome of a 'desire for and attachment to earthly companions'!! "His continual thinking on the subject (woman and gold) made him extremely nervous and produced in him a sense of imaginary danger"! And "whatever might be the explanation given by Sri Ramakrishna himself or his followers," they further say, "the psychological explanation is that subconsciously he felt himself insecure and in constant danger of succumbing to their evil influence. Kamini-Kanchana (woman and gold) became his 'nightmare' and 'daymare' "!!! This is how his life has appealed to-day to the intelligence of a few self-constituted critics who pose themselves as infallible judges of human character—the character of such world-movers. But there is nothing unnatural in an 'appreciation' of this type, for persons

without any spiritual experience and depth of insight are apt to look at such lives from a narrow angle of vision that can hardly transcend the obsession of intellectual vanity and earthly considerations. But there are, besides, master-minds in India and the world outside with wider sympathy and broader outlook, to whom his life is a unique synthesis of spiritual realisations and furnishes a key to the truths that govern the various phases of human life. "When a Ramakrishna has known the grasp of such truths," says Romain Rolland, "they do not remain within him as ideas. They quicken into life, into the seeds of life, and fertilised by his credo, they flourish and come to fruition in an orchard of "realisations", no longer abstract and isolated, but clearly defined, with a practical bearing on daily life, for they nourish the hunger of men. The Divine flesh, the substance of the universe, once tasted, is to be found again, the same, at all tables and all religions. In it he partakes of the food of immortality in a Lord's supper, not of twelve disciples but of all starving souls—of the universe itself." Thus this mystic soul is being revealed unto different minds in a variety of ways according to the standard of intellectual sympathy and mental equipment with which they approach this dynamic personality.

But there is nothing 'mysterious' in such a life of spiritual wisdom. Men have very little patience to see how the cosmic mind is stirred to its depth by the soul-enthraling music of a single life. Sri Ramakrishna lived in his own person, as it were, the entire life of humanity and gave out in the fulness of his spiritual ecstasy the whole of his being unto the world. His is indeed a life that reveals an uncompromising quest after Truth—a life that unfolds the various grades of spiritual experiences culminating in the realisation of oneness of humanity and their spiritual destiny. Dazzled by the bright radiance of his realisations we more often than not fail to look back into that period of spiritual madness, which forms one of the most fascinating chapters of his life. For over twelve long years his God-intoxicated soul remained completely dead to the outside world. Nothing is indeed more significant and appealing to a responsive mind than the heart-rending lamentations of his soul, for the vision of the Mother Divine. "His whole soul as it were, melted into one flood of tears, and he appealed to the Goddess to have mercy on him and reveal herself unto him. No mother ever shed such

burning tears over the death-bed of her only child. Crowds assembled round him and tried to console him, when the blowing of the conch-shells proclaimed the death of another day, and he gave vent to his sorrow, saying, 'Mother, Oh my mother, another day has gone, and still I have not found thee.' Nothing is more eloquent and impressive than this struggle of his soul for God-realisation. Indeed, a great religious tornado raged within him during his period of Sadhana. But with the advance of his spiritual life, the doubts that pricked his soul were all cleared and he reached a plane of spiritual consciousness from where he could view with sympathy and love all forms of religious beliefs extant in the world; for when the unity is reached, the diversities become all the more instinct with life and meaning.

His life illustrates the variety of processes open to individuals for the realisation of the spiritual aspirations. He explored for humanity all the approaches to the realm of eternal wisdom, and there was no religious faith that he did not practise and no truth that he did not realise in his own life. Every form of belief revealed unto his vision a world of spiritual significance. He visualised the fundamental unity of all faiths and proclaimed in no uncertain voice the harmony of the apparently conflicting religions of the world. Human minds threading different paths ultimately reach to the same Supreme Reality that stands as the unifying link behind the diversities of forms. Humanity needed such a message and he came upon the earth for the revelation of this universal truth. The religious conflicts are more often the results of an incorrect understanding of the basic principles of Religion. A Hindu and a Muslim, a Christian and a Buddhist, a Jain and a Parsi—all were to Sri Ramakrishna but pilgrims to the same Holy Land; the paths were only different. The varieties of religious forms like the diversities of streams lead eventually to the Ocean of one Eternal Religion where all contradictions meet, and forms lose their distinctive identity. Sri Ramakrishna's life, as such, is a living synthesis of all faiths and creeds, for it is he alone who has boldly fingered the various strings of the Instrument of Harmony with the consummate skill of a master-player and produced a rhythm that has engulfed in it all the different notes of the world's multifarious creeds and beliefs. The more intimately we study his life, the more deeply do we feel convinced of the supreme grandeur of Religion; for his life is an eloquent illustration of the unity of all thoughts and systems.

From his very boyhood Sri Ramakrishna had an aversion to all kinds of intellectual learning 'the sole aim of which was to gain a few pieces of silver or a few maunds of rice and vegetables. He yearned to learn something which would raise him above all these and give him as a recompense God Himself'. The realisation of the supreme Reality is not conditional upon any amount of intellectual knowledge. It is the sincerity of purpose and the intense craving for the Lord that furnish the real groundwork of a spiritual life. Since the hoary antiquity scholars and scientists are vainly labouring in their libraries and laboratories for the discovery of that light of wisdom for which the mystics and the God-intoxicated plunge into the depth of their soul. Many a giant intellect has lost his path in the unending maze of philosophical dissertations and ended his life as a rank atheist. For the Reality stands far beyond the reach of intellect. So the scripture has said :—

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैव आत्मा विवृणुते तत्तु स्वाम् ॥

"This Atman cannot be attained by dint of study or intelligence or much hearing. Whom the aspirant wishes to attain—by that (seeking) alone can that Atman be attained. To him this Atman reveals its true nature." The people are hoodwinked into the belief that the highest knowledge is the exclusive monopoly of the learned pedants who hold, as it were, in their hands the key to the door of Heaven. The unsophisticated minds of the illiterate people have thus been kept under a delusion for ages. Nothing has been more outrageous than this presumption of the Pandits who hold the scriptural knowledge to be the only passport to the realm of eternal freedom. Sri Ramakrishna's is a life that silences critics and puzzles even the profoundest of philosophers. He has demonstrated that purity and sincerity are the only requisites for the attainment of a life divine and that the highest knowledge is not the exclusive possession of a particular caste or creed. This is one of the most precious of all the legacies he has bequeathed to humanity. That intellectual knowledge has also its own usefulness in its limited sphere no body can gainsay, but in matters spiritual it oftener than not drags many an aspirant to the morass of an unprofitable life, from which none but the blessed one can disentangle himself. Sri Ramakrishna's life, moreover, illustrates a triumphant ascent of

the human soul by gradual stages to the terraced height of Absolutism. He has shown that "the three great orders of metaphysical thought, Dualism, "modified" (or mitigated) Monism and Absolute Monism, are stages on the way to supreme Truth. They are not contradictory, but rather when added the one to the other are complementary." As a matter of fact he realised the validity of all the stages that are harmoniously knitted together in a graded series of spiritual experiences culminating in the realisation of the Formless Absolute—One without a second. He visualised the same Brahman existing in all from the highest to the lowest of creation and proclaimed to humanity that all are the embodiments of the same Reality—the difference being only in the degrees of manifestation of the Divinity already in all and the Supreme Knowledge is attainable by whatsoever way one may strive for it. The various paths—Jnana, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga—all lead but to the same goal, if followed with steady zeal and application, and no colour, caste or creed is any the least bar to the sacred temple of self-realisation. A spiritual democrat, Sri Ramakrishna has thrown open the gate of Knowledge to all and that is one of the most eloquent reasons why his message has transcended the geographical bounds and is receiving the spontaneous acceptance all over the world from India to the distant shores of the Atlantic.

Sri Ramakrishna's life of artless simplicity, penance and renunciation in an age when materialistic tendencies have wrought havoc in the world and robbed human nature of much of its sweetness and charm is verily a clarion-call to rise to the radiance of spirit and shows with unfailing directness the noble path which India, nay the whole humanity should follow in the interest of peace and harmony. The idolisation of the dollar-god with its concomitant effects of strife and rivalry, warfare and bloodshed, oppression and brutality, has been the baneful feature of the day. The noble instincts of love and fraternity have been sacrificed at the altar of Mammon. In fact the condition of the modern world reveals one of the most tragic chapters in the history of the human race. And there is no knowing when this mad competition for wealth and power would make room for a nobler striving for fraternity and love among mankind. The history has sounded the tocsin of alarm many a time before but its lessons have received but scanty consideration at the hands of the

warring and self-forgetful humanity. The warning of Sri Ramakrishna has not come a day too soon. His voice is the same eternal voice of Truth that has been calling the erring world from age to age to the path of life divine—of peace and harmony, of renunciation and love. The lofty idealism of life has been lost sight of in the wild-goose chase of material prosperity, and the humanity is running precipitately into a hopeless state of endless suffering. And unless the inwardness of vision is attained and men begin to view the phenomena of life from a higher perspective, there is nothing that can bridle the brutish instincts of human nature. It is humanly impossible to spiritualise the motive of action without a corresponding change in the attitude of mind. This the West should learn from the meditative East. Sri Ramakrishna stands at the junction of the two great worlds—the East and the West—as the prophet of peace and harmony with all the wealth of his spiritual realisation, and bringing back from the womb of the forgotten past the living truths of the Eternal Vedas, holds before humanity a life of wonderful synthesis of all creeds and religions. Some of the master-minds of the West have already responded to the call and there are unmistakable signs of a sincere craving in the East and the West for an evolution of a higher culture and a better understanding between the two. And it is not too much to point out that the universal teachings of Sri Ramakrishna shall furnish the real foundation of any constructive scheme for lasting peace and harmony in the world.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY

By *M. A. Venkata Rao, M.A.*

Mighty things are discussed under this heading. If not every school-boy every college student knows that it is the title that F. H. Bradley made famous in recent times by the profoundest metaphysical essay since the days of Kant and Hegel. We propose to consider a single antithesis covered by the title, a single case of the contrast between Appearance and Reality, a case that confronts us the moment we open our eyes.

'Do not all charms fly at the touch of cold philosophy?'—asks the poet and returns a most emphatic 'yes' for answer. The world is full of colour and sound and scent. It is firm and compact of forces; and even when it changes, the changes display order and are intelligible.

"My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky."

"The sounding cataract was to me a haunting passion".

But if the rainbow is not really coloured and the sound of the cataract is only the reverberation in our ears, telling us nothing about the cataract itself, but eloquent only of the intricacies of wave patterns? If modern science is to be taken as a final account of things, the glory of the rainbow and the haunting roar of the cataract are *in us and not out there*. What is out there are only swarms of atoms, incredibly minute nothings millionths of an inch in size, rushing out at incredible speeds thousands of miles per second in a space which is no space. What are we to believe,—the direct report of our sensations or the authoritative verdict of *scientific reason*? The world appears as clothed in colour and sound and odour; it may *not be really* coloured and sounding and odorous. In philosophy this contrast has come to be known as the contrast between primary and secondary qualities. Descartes laid down the distinction sharply, and all modern science has accepted the arrangement as a methodological postulate, leaving its ultimate tenability to be wrangled about by philosophers. The primary qualities are the physical properties of matter-extension only according to Descartes, extension and resistance according to Locke. The external world therefore consists of pure space, with the mysterious property of producing colour, sound, odour, and pressure sensations in us. The gorgeous riot of colours in the sunset are therefore illusory. They are the effects of matter upon our eyes. The poets only weave webs of illusion to beguile us. Their visions are visions merely soothing and even exhilarating, but not to be believed. When the

man of religion speaks of God in earth and plant and animal, as well as in man, it is only a way of speaking. It is good to believe such things. It makes us fit for society. It helps us to keep out of jail or lend a helping hand to our neighbour.

Now is this the last word on the matter? This is a question that must be answered satisfactorily before we make up our minds as to what we are to do with such riddles of our inheritance as Kalidasa or Kabir, Shakespeare or Plato. Even on the humbler level of common sense, it is an eminently unsatisfactory situation. The 'man in the street' that ubiquitous being—upon whom the modern world depends for everything, cannot bring himself to believe that the rose is only a dance of atoms, and that its colour and fragrance are only properties of his eyes and nose.

Let us glance at the *scientific philosophy* that would put the glory of the world into our skins, and see whether the line of thought is so irresistible. Let us confine ourselves to one quality for the sake of simplicity, say colour. Is the rose really red? What happens when we see a rose? *Something* is out there, a portion of space, a configuration of *space time*; so much is granted. A particular design of colourless void is out there, then. There are such things as light waves, waves in ether. These waves strike the rose, the space-time configuration in question and travel in all directions. Some of these reach the eye. Now the eye is a very complex piece of machinery, there are many parts in it, and each part must fulfil its function before we can see anything. The waves pass through the lens, and a liquid behind it, affect the rods and cones in the inner wall of the eye, all which together set up a current in the optic nerve. This current travels to a particular area of the cortex, and sets up a peculiar excitement there. And if the rest of the brain is in normal condition, and nothing comes in the way, a miracle supervenes. *We see*, we are conscious, not of the cortical excitement, not of the transactions in the eye, not certainly the ether waves, nor even the spatial configuration, which started the whole thing, *but the rose*. What is this rose then? No one can say; it appears to be where the space-time configuration is. But its redness is *not* anywhere. Some philosophers* who have burnt their boats and capitulated to the glamour of scientific achievements in other *fields* such as the "Kerosine tin and the telegraph wire" have the courage to announce that the rose is 'in the head'. It is identical with the cortical excitement in the brain. But we do not see the cortical excitement. We see the rose, and we see *it out there*. But if science is to be believed there is no such thing *there*,

*cf. Bertrand Russell's recent books, viz., *Analysis of Matter* and *An Outline of Philosophy*.

not redness at all events. Something is wrong somewhere, though it is difficult to locate the fallacy. Every step seems to be irrefragable, and has a science at the back of it. The array of authorities behind this interpretation is formidable—physics, chemistry, physiology.

Perhaps an analogy may let in a ray of light. Suppose we are puzzling out the meaning of a poem, and call in the help of the sciences. Certainly we can trace the meanings of words, the association between one word and another, how one rhyme suggested another, and so on. It would all be valuable. But can any amount of research about the words, their inter-relations, the ramifications of sound and melody bring us to a point of view from which the *meaning of the poem as a whole* emerges? We might develop a mathematics of *structure*, and of wave mechanics implicit in the poem, but it would *lead* us nowhere. We would be like squirrels going round and round the cage, unable to get out or to have a glimpse of the locus of the cage.

Similarly the physics, chemistry and physiology of seeing the rose will not explain colour. The chain from the thing to cortical excitement may be ever so complete and perfect, but redness will not emerge if *mind does not come upon* the scene, make use of the apparatus, and interpret the message of it all. From cortical excitement to awareness of red there is a gulf, seemingly impassable, but passed lightly and triumphantly every moment of our waking lives. It is extraordinary that so acute a thinker as Bertrand Russell should bring himself to make light of the gulf and interpret perception as seeing events in the brain. The fallacy in this formidable chain lies here in equating the mental event, namely, awareness of colour with the physical events in the brain. The two are continuous in a way, but they are *not homogeneous in stuff*. They are *not cause and effect*. We cannot say that the cortical excitement causes the awareness of red. It is only an *occasion* to turn the mind in a particular direction. The physico-chemical chain is no more the cause of the seeing of colour than the telephone system is the cause of all the messages sent through it. The ether wave, the world and the sense organs may therefore be *instruments* through which we see things as they are.

This idea of *scientific philosophy* (I say scientific philosophy because physics, chemistry and physiology do not dogmatise about these things) that the things of the world impinge upon us and cause sensations in us, was rendered current by Locke and has persisted and perverted philosophy all along, in addition to misleading science pulverising knowledge, and upsetting religion. Kant first pointed out the inadequacy of the causal idea to this relation but he did not succeed in overcoming its influence completely. If colour is an effect, upon our sense organ, it can only be an appearance *for us*, but *not of*

this thing. "The scratch only knows itself ; it knows nothing of the thorn."—(Dr. H. Stirling). The effect need not be *like* the cause and the world is robbed of light and warmth, colour and fragrance ; and the higher insight of mankind is flouted. Poetry and Religion become beautiful myths to disappear in the light of science. Dr. Whitehead has recently put in a powerful protest against this "bifurcation of nature", between nature as it is—dance of electrons, and nature as it appears, clothed with a beauty rich and various.

Suppose we recognise the qualitative difference between mind and physical things, and regard the latter as instrumental to perception. The rose is far from coming into its own yet. The colour that I see is different, however slightly, from the colour you see, in brightness, or variety. And the colour-blind see only white or grey or black. Further the shade varies with the distance. At a distance it becomes faint. What is *the* exact colour of the rose ? Yours or mine, that which it reveals near or at a distance ? Has it all of them including the grey which it appears to the colour-blind, or an animal with a deficiency of cones in the eye ?

And if we consider size and spatial appearance we will have to say that the flower is a conglomeration of all its appearances from all possible points of view, from all possible distances, and in all possible shades of light or darkness. If that is so, it is difficult to see what remains of the design, unity and structure of the flower. Its exquisite adjustment of elements disappears in a maelstrom of qualities and relations. If we would avoid this conclusion, we must think of a "synthesis of appearances." The rose is a synthesis of appearances. Now synthesis implies design, and if we include *all appearances*, the design vanishes. We are thus led to some *normal* or *standard set* of appearances as *the appearances* of the flower, and all others as due to disturbing influences of the medium of light or absence of cones in the eye. But what determines normality ? The usual light and shade ? Normal distance ? Now how does change in distance introduce change in shade of colour ? The *design* is therefore *elastic*, and *dynamic* and puts forth different appearances under different conditions. Can such a changing, dynamic "*something*" that displays different designs, and different shades under different conditions according to an orderly system be properly called a "physical or space-time configuration" ? Can it be dead and wooden, fixed and unchanging, like a photographic plate ?

Let us suppose that the thing has the mysterious power of putting forth different colours and other appearances under different conditions according to an orderly and calculable system. *Colour really belongs to the rose* then. It is a *revelation* of its nature. It may be

this revelation requires certain conditions—ether waves, and so on. Now arises the further question,—*did colour exist in the universe before organisms with eyes appeared upon the scene?* As we noticed before, organisms with eyes are not enough. The dead or unconscious body does not *see*. Was the rose red before the appearance of mind-organisms with eyes? And involved in it? Is the rose red when no one is looking at it? Common sense has no doubts. It says an emphatic yes. Is it far wrong? *Colour to be seen* requires certain conditions, mind, body and the physical medium. Does it require them all *to exist*? Does the mind-body-eye *create* the colour out of the physical message? If body-eye-ether constitute only the instruments of perception, it is the mind that must be the creator of colour. Many philosophers have held this position, notably Berkeley. In the beginning, during the countless ages before the appearance of mind upon the earth, the world was colourless. And when no one is looking at a thing, it is colourless. It is difficult to see why we should be coerced into this position. Yet many eminent thinkers do not unambiguously declare themselves about it. It may be that for *colour to be seen*, mind-bodies are necessary. It may be for full appreciation and discrimination the human eye is necessary. But for the redness of the rose to exist, it would seem that the only things necessary are *the rose and the physical universe*. The rose is an essence, nature or power, some X if you will, which shows itself in certain combinations of colour and texture and perfume under certain conditions. There is an intimate connection between its environment of earth and air and sunshine, and its qualities. Since it has the power of exhibiting different systems of qualities, different syntheses it is not enough to describe it as *A Synthesis*, certainly very inadequate as a space-time synthesis. The rose focuses its environment and reveals a balance of forces which we can only describe as beauty. At any rate, colour would seem to belong *to it, and not to us*.

Defects in the eye changing the colour, and absence of developed differentiation in the eye resulting in its omission do not prove that colour is in our skin. When jaundice makes things yellow, the things display yellow under those conditions; they have no normal colour. The colour we notice in daylight may be said to be normal. But any change of conditions brings about a change in manifestation of the essence of the flower or other thing. Variation of medium leads to variation of manifestation, because there is a close and intimate connection between thing and its situation. The thing is a multiple-essence, dynamic in nature related to a multiple system of conditions. It is a fountain of emergence. All its appearances are equally real. The appearances are *relative to the standpoint and operating me i.*

Quality is the expression of an area in a focus. As Ruskin put it, colour is the spirit of things, so that when the poets' heart leaps up when he beholds a rainbow in the sky, he may be wiser than the scientific philosophers of the present day. When the man of religion has an inexpugnable sense of *something more* than what meets the eye and ear, he is possessed of a truth which the world may yet come to understand, if not to appreciate, in the fulness of time. And the only pathway leading to this end is philosophy, an obstinate attempt to think things through to the bitter end. If charms fly at the cold touch of philosophy they may be only meretricious ones ; and if stable ones are to remain, a further plunge is the only remedy.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMAN AND GOLD

By Dewan Bahadur P. Sitaramayya, M.A.

In laying special stress on the Bhakti-marga as the most suitable path for man's salvation in this spiritually degenerate age Sri Ramakrishna laid particular emphasis on the aspect of the "Motherhood of God." Christianity got its peculiar bias against this doctrine from the religion of the Old Testament where the idea of Jehovah was that of the War-lord or the lord of hosts who always led his chosen people the *Israelites* and gave them victory by crushing their enemies,—the idolaters who worshipped goddesses. The tendency of every people to seat God in the leading war-chariot and make Him their standard-bearer on the battlefield is apparently deep-rooted in the vanity of self-righteous human instinct. All history indicates this narrowness of the human mind to this day. As a matter of fact objectionable practices which had grown with the debasing of the old ideal of God as the Mother roused the detestation of the *Israelites*, whose prophets rightly thundered wrathfully against the other people outside their own elect race. When over nineteen centuries ago Lord Christ preached his new gospel of God in His aspect of all-compassionate love to supersede the hate-for-hate gospel of the Old Testament, the Mother aspect of God was in His great wisdom not stressed, obviously because it was against the genius of all Hebraic tradition and history. In ancient lands such as Egypt, Greece, Babylon, Assyria and Chaldea the idea of the Divine was presented in the Father-Mother aspect. In India this idea has always stood its ground. Sri Lakshmi ever resting in the bosom of Sri Vishnu, Sri Kanyaka, Parvathi, or Kali forming half the body of Maha Siva, Sri Radha the dearest embodiment of divine love merged in Sri Krishna are a few concrete embodiments in human language of this spiritual

fact. Much withering indignation has been poured and much of unrighteous condemnation has been hurled on the gods and goddesses of barbaric India by the ignorant though perhaps honest exponents of other iconoclastic religions, as if the idea of the masculine and feminine merged in one divine entity were a blasphemous degradation. That in creation each man has a woman's nature in part and each woman a man's nature in part is a fact often overlooked in spite of its challenging obtrusiveness. The persistence of the worship of Mary—the Mother of Christ—amongst the Roman Catholics indicates in a way that the deepest instincts of man feel an irresistible reverence to the glorious fact of woman as typifying divine Motherhood through one of whose types even great redeemers have incarnated on earth as the messengers of the Heavenly Father. If even God can come down as human only through a woman it is difficult to say why the glory of motherhood should not be equal in all respects to that of fatherhood even in the eye of Him who in His wisdom made both His vehicles. So far as we are concerned at present, we have the historic fact testified to by the only man who could know of it, that the Paramahansa realized the Divine through the Divine Mother Kali. Times without number he insisted on declaring that Her grace alone helped him to that heavenly consummation and asserted with all the emphasis at his command that except by the grace of the Mother man cannot realize God in whichever Yogamarga he may strive to press on and on towards his goal. You may blot out everything that he said but he will never allow you the impudence of burking that bold and challenging declaration. From the personal God to the impersonal is the only way to Truth. It may be that man's conceit as the masculine animal has much to do with this prejudice, that this vanity tries to gloss over the humiliation of his real defeats at the hands of the feminine and makes him blatantly boast of being a victor when every time she actually bears him down and makes him the vanquished. It may be that this feeling accounts for his dislike to give the feminine a prominence in the Divine. Any way, it is apparent that the defects of human language have debased the idea through the sensual mentality of man who can never think except grossly of a father and mother except as the joint breeders of a physical child. The Master's Guru was at first one Totapuri. When he had to test the much-condemned Tantric practices of the Shaktas to realize their utility and truth and warn us against their dangers as well, his Guru was Brahmamayi Yogeswari a saintly God-mad woman, who after meeting him under orders actually played towards him the part of the loving mother Yasoda to Her beloved child Krishna.

A Guru is a God, so proclaim the Indian sages. The Mahaguru or Jagat-guru is Iswara Himself or Ishwari the Divine Mother

the Adi-shakti. In this case the guiding intermediary was a woman who led him to the Divine Mother. The significance of this one fact of a woman Guru needs to be realized by conceited men of the present age. We may also recall the meaning of similar incidents in the lives of Adi Shankara and Gautama Buddha when a woman played a vital part in the spiritual flowering of the man into the sage. With deep knowledge of human nature the Indian sages have analysed the emotion of love or prema as master and servant's love, friend's love, filial love and conjugal love, as steps leading up to the Divine maternal love. To use the Master's own words let us give him the power of attorney and leave him to expound his doctrine. God, said he, is the Unconditioned beyond name and form, the Absolute, the Unmanifested, Parabrahman of the Upanishads. When He pleases to manifest Himself He by His Shakti limits Himself by the conditions of earthly life in myriad forms and under myriad names known as the world. His Shakti or energy, in other words, He Himself is called the Divine Mother or the personal God. The creation, preservation and destruction of forms with names in this everchanging world or Jagat is a manifestation of His Shakti. The Divine Mother is Himself the Divine Father manifest. Self-conscious man is the highest manifestation on earth of all other conscious things below him and it is his supreme privilege to know himself, to find himself and realize his true relationship to God by expanding his self-consciousness to cosmic consciousness. Man *must* know the Iswara, the Divine Father or Ishwaree another name for the Divine Mother. Her grace alone can help him to realize the Supreme. She is the Vedantist's Maya of the relative world as against the Absolute Reality. She is the Sita who ever stands with Rama and moves as the inseparable companion of her lord with Lakshmana behind her. Lakshmana could not see Rama unless Sita was gracious enough to stand aside to let him (the Jeevatman) know and see the Paramatman. If she wills it and only if she wills it, can man go beyond the conditioned and manifested Shakti and become one with the Unconditioned or Parabrahman. In Yogic parlance this is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Mahasamadhi or absorption in the Nirguna Brahman while the Saguna Brahman is the manifested God who can never be thought of without His Shakti, who again can never be thought of without the unmanifested Brahman. You cannot think of milk without its white colour, of fire without its heat, of the wave without the sea, the sun or moon without his or her light, says the Master. In this manner, the Master has restored to reverential acceptance the faith in the Motherhood of God which in ancient empires as well as in India had perished after it had been divorced from its original purity and had sunk into

odium through the ignorance and sensuality of worldly-minded man. Our impurity is reflected above till we allow Divine grace to change it thoroughly into love of the Divine. Our heaven is reflected earth for the earthly-minded and our earth is reflected heaven for the pure and holy. Thus has the Master also given woman her true place of honour as the mother of man par excellence.

It is at the same time apparently extraordinary that the most frequent warning given by the Master to his masculine hearers was "Guard against Kamini and Kanchana." To the woman it necessarily implies "Guard against Kama and Kanchana." Gold or wealth is the source of all the passions—love of power, love of pomp, love of wealth, love of self or pride, etc., which breed cruelty, tyranny, self-aggrandizement based on the destruction of other men's good—all of which imply hatred of other people and worship of the Ahamkar or self. This is one of the two primary instincts of man, whose hunger takes a myriad monstrous shapes. The other basic instinct of human nature is lust. Both are tremendous powers for good and evil. The soul has no sex which relates only to the body. It has been ordained that the soul should be trained in the college or school of earthly life. It has to pass from one class to another higher class and higher still till at last it fits itself to be in body with the spirit of a citizen of the world. During this grand process the soul in the body of man or woman grows gradually higher and higher in mental, moral and spiritual stature. Self-effort is the only qualification for success in this effort. There is no jobbery, no favouritism, no caste, colour, or creed, advantage, no recommendation for admission and promotion. The Divine Mother—the manifested father-mother love of God—is always ready and waiting to approach the conditioned soul, if it intensely yearns for Her and Her alone. She will send Her messengers in time to help, to guide and to lead her struggling children upward whenever they need courage and strength on their strenuous march. She may graciously cut short the effort, if the man's or woman's Bhakti is uncommonly pure and terrible in the strength which forces the Mother heart to rush out and open Her bosom to embrace the returning truant child. The knocking at the door must be so unceasing as to completely ignore the desires of the world which will be left behind. For over twelve years the Master himself had knocked at the door till his pure all-engrossed love as a child dragged down or out Her love as a Mother to reveal Herself to him. No wonder his exalted mind helped him in its purity to look upon every girl or woman—young or old—as a manifestation of Shakti. His own wife—a blessed soul-mate meet for his soul—was to him a mother, though their bodies lay on the same bed. It was a marriage of souls indeed to show all the householders

an ideal which they can try to reach through Bhakti in this world. Such were the tests he applied rigorously to himself to convince a doubting people. A mother busy working in the kitchen with her ears open and her heart always dwelling on the forgetful child playing outside with its toys, a child in hunger throwing its toys away and crying for the mother, a mother dropping the half-boiled rice pot and rushing out in answer to the call of the child and snatching it up to her bosom—this, said the Master, faintly shadows forth the love between the human soul and the Mother Divine. In passing through the varied experiences of earthly life do we not see the same person presenting different aspects of love to his or her servant, to his or her master or mistress, to his or her father or mother, to his or her children or friends, to her husband or his wife and the other persons giving appropriate though varied response to the one personality? This life-aspect is a shadow of the one unchanging Reality appearing as many changing realities at His pleasure. The Father's love to the beautiful daughter is different from his love to his handsome wife or sister or mother. The mother's love to her son is quite distinct from her love to her handsome husband, brother or father. We know that at first carnality or lust enters most the relationship of conjugal life. As time goes on the physical aspect recedes while the higher form of friendliness and sympathy takes possession of the two personalities concerned and brings them into closer union. Through gradual self-control, the mind gets more and more purified till the common acid marriage of the gross bodies in youth nearly ripens into the sweet spiritual marriage of the souls.

The master's message to every man is—"Look upon every other woman as your mother actual and if she be a girl as a mother in the making." And to every woman "Look on every other man as your father actual or a father in the making if he be young. Treat them all as brothers or sisters or sons or fathers or mothers. Learn by daily conduct and practice (Sadhana) to develop this mentality—which is always the only key to all outward physical acts—and by the grace of God the Mother you will reach the bosom of Divine Love Shakti which has been manifested in so many forms. If you are married people, after begetting a few children—thereby repaying your debt to the fathers—Pitirrinam—your habit of self-control will become so strong as to teach even you the husband or you the wife ever afterwards to look upon the other as your mother or father respectively. The sexual attraction of the early days of married life will be replaced by sexless affection as time passes on and the habit of self-control is strengthened. The sacred privilege given by God to self-conscious man and woman to utilise their Shakti to reproduce their

kind and keep His world going for His great purposes should be recognized—as it was recognized in ancient times—as a great opportunity to spend your sexual energy in the minimum and use the rest to vivify, elevate and fit you both for social service, which is also service to the spiritual God." Is there not a deep meaning in our daily habit of addressing every girl or woman other than the wife as "amma" or "mother" and every boy or man other than the husband as "appa" or "father"? Let this custom serve us as a constant reminder of the spiritual truth of the One All-Mother manifesting as the many apparently different fathers and mothers and help us to realise the ideal through the daily living of purer and purer lives.

When we remember that the sexual instinct is all powerful, cannot we realize how we can let it drag us down by our surrender or force it to lead us up by our mastery? The will to think purely, the will to train the mind to obey us, the will to master the power of lust is the weapon that makes man the maker of his fate and the master of his destiny. Lust and greed force men downward away from God. They should be deflected upwards into pure love and selfless service to help man upwards to God. If man degrades the woman by his lust she will destroy him. If woman degrades man by her lust he will destroy her. Both will be destroyed by lust and both will be saved when it is transformed into pure love or *prama*. The Divine Mother of love blesses and reveals Herself to the pure-loving. The same Shakti as the Destroying Angel in Her dreadful aspect will in Her great anger punish those who have insulted and outraged Her in Her manifested human personalities. All the existing social diseases—the fruits of our past sins—must be examined by us in the light of this truth thus declared by a man of truth. Man and woman should take the terrible warning which though oft-repeated has been passed by unheeded despite the resulting horrors that mock them all round, lest worse suffering like an avenging angel should sear the truth into their brains and hearts with Her pen of fire. The sacred duty of man to improve the woman in body, heart, mind and spirit is thus brought under the search light of the Master's warning. Woe unto man, if he treats woman only as his slave and vessel of carnal pleasure as heretofore and neglects his duty to help the mother of man in her emancipation from her present status of ornamental toyhood.

The advanced souls pull their minds entirely out of lust and greed. They are above all desires for themselves. Their perfect purity places them face to face with the source of All-Love. They are the Immortals, the Buddhas, the Christs, the Chaitanyas, the Ramakrishnas of the world—the world citizens whether born in a manger or a stable, a cottage or a palace. Starting like every one of

us far back in the womb of Time they have by heroic striving, incessant endeavour, great humility, all-embracing love, worked through the ages, through the paths of Jnana and Bhakti to know and afterwards reveal to us the Divine. All such beings speak of what they know. It is foolish impudence for us to say that they are unpractical men, that we who know little of our real self and less of our neighbour's know more than they of this world's Training Institute whose good and evil experience is the only fitting preparation for each of us for the journey beyond it and that those who have seen God the Maker of the universe know less than we of the practical man and his boasted and boastful practical world. Let us in all reverence accept and act on the Master's reaffirmation of an ancient truth that the lust of man or woman and love of greed and their brood of evil should be gradually purified by continuous daily self-effort respectively into love of all women as mother's and all men as father's and love of all men's good till at last in the fullness of time by the grace of the Divine we shall each realise the Father-Mother in all and all in the Father-Mother.

IS WANT A CURSE ?

By Prof. Suresh Chandra Sen Gupta, M.A.

A man's knowledge and progress are determined by his wants and requirements. He cares to know and advance in the world in which he lives, influenced by his peculiar needs and sense of want. The struggle to keep us going stimulates in us the desire to scan and study our resources. If man were ushered into life a full-grown adult with all his requirements supplied, he would for ever remain a dull fool with no anxiety to learn or know anything—his mind then would be a *tabula rasa* and his existence little better than the merely sentient or animal existences of the plant or brute world.

The calf begins to skip about in excess of joy the moment it is born and finds no difficulty in adapting itself to its environments—it loses no time in getting out of its mother's udders its due share of milk and soon finds the rich repast of the green meadow under its feet, spread out by a kindly Providence. The Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence applies, of course, to all forms of animal life—but I venture to think that the animals are little bothered, in comparison with their "cousins" of a higher rank, by a sense of want. They find Nature a genial mother with her gifts scattered in profusion for their use and their "advantage" over man consists in their well-developed instincts, which help them on to the mysteries of existence with little

or no effort. Poets have sung about this happier state of the animal kingdom and have wished in the agony of their souls to exchange their lots with those of birds and beasts ! The latter are not haunted by any sense of want or privation. Poverty, disease or disappointment, ingratitude or cruelty, avarice or greed do not make them miserable. They are, in other words, happy. They are born rich and die rich. And so we find the dog of to-day to have made but little advance upon the dog of Ulysses and the modern monkey little better than the chattering animal of Darwin's imagination, unhappily raised by him to the status of our progenitor. Affluence or wealth thus is a curse from the standpoint of progress.

Man's superiority over the brute creation lies in his wants—his perennial struggle with the adverse circumstances of life. He is born poor, naked of ready-made gifts or resources. Nature to him is a sort of step-mother, who will not give him anything, without making him toil or strive for it. Man wages an eternal warfare with the facts of life which do not readily shape themselves to his wishes. He must have an ardent will and a fund of never-failing energy to adapt himself to his environs. The man who wants to order things and circumstances to his passing whim or caprice ends by making a fool of himself like the foolish Danish king in English history who wanted the waves to obey him. The waves of life will obey the man who knows how to pilot the ship of his life with skill and a calm and resolute will.

The helpless child in its swaddling clothes expresses its wants and gives indications of its will by its cries. The intelligent mother knowing their true significance seeks to remove these wants in the right way. The child's life is a life of no small struggle and it is a judicious adjustment of that life to the exigencies of particular existences or individuals which constitutes the main problem of the mother's career and that mother will have signally failed in her serious task who does not know how to rightly interpret and guide the wants of her child as indicated by its cry or smile or the movements of its limbs. The foolish mother who out of her ignorance or abundance of her affection or indifference ignores the expressions of her child's wants makes an awful wreck of a whole life—for the child then grows with a dwarfed or mutilated will and fails to grasp the problem of life and cannot adjust himself to his surroundings and remains a fool for ever. So it is the right direction given to the wants of our child life that will determine how these wants will ultimately shape themselves.

The sense of want must be created by a wise mother and teacher. A good mother will never make it easy for her child to get its wishes

fulfilled for the mere asking. She will on the contrary, teantalise, as Nature does, lure her child through successive stages of knowledge—its failures and stumblings—till the toy be given. The child must be made to crawl to its plaything at times and its mishandling of the same must be made the occasion for punishment.

Gifts are to be earned and acquired by our fitness and not simply won over as a favour from an over indulgent mother. Our adulthood has to develop through this sense of want, if we want to be men.

Now wants, as indicated above, take shapes and forms according to the training received in childhood. If our wants remain in the physical plane only, our knowledge of things in the universe will confine itself to a search for the qualities and properties of matter as, when harnessed to our purposes, will remove our wants. The moment we ascend higher in our sense of wants we feel that a removal of our physical needs only will not bring us satisfaction. The scholar who feels miserable, unable to find a solution for an intellectual puzzle will not derive happiness from any amount of food and raiment one may heap upon him. He has his wants of a different kind, a higher type, and he must be satisfied in a different way. He will seek and strive, and, when the true knowledge comes to shine upon him as the result of his toil, he feels his wants removed. The poet's imagination feels a want and he creates his *Miranda* or *Sakuntala*. His wants will not be helped by even the fabled wealth of Persia or India of old. Shakespeare might have longed for a better living and perhaps cared for the earnings of a crowded house but his fulfilment as a poet was in the creation of his *Hamlet* and not in the drafting of his will earmarking his fortune for his family. His *Hamlet* removed his sense of want and this came upon him as his crown. The patriot fighting for the freedom of his land will make little of the wants which engage the attention and knowledge of hundreds of toiling souls. He sees a realm and a condition of things which others may not—his knowledge is of a different sort and this supports him in his struggle. The prince who threw away a kingdom to see the misery of man and went out in search of a redress for human suffering had also his wants. His wants opened up to his vision a world which had its fascination for him only and when after years of patient endurance, true knowledge dawned upon him, he felt the relief.

Thus it will be clear that our sense of want will determine the kind of knowledge we shall come by and the progress we shall attain. If there were no want, there would be no growth.

There are, of course, some wants which a selfish or a too ambitious nature creates only to court ruin. Macbeth's want is not to be regarded as a normal kind and it is better that human nature

should shun such sort of wants. Men fond of an abnormal desire of some kind or another, not calculated to be beneficial either to themselves or their species are to be regarded as aberrations of nature and should by no means be taken as models. It is difficult in some cases to draw a line of demarcation between legitimate or moral and illegitimate or immoral desires. But the difficulty is more exaggerated than real. The poor man's greed of the wealth of his neighbour trying to find vent in theft or robbery is not an instance of natural want. It is an artificially created desire. Lust's eye on beauty is an immoral and artificial want and Nature never meant to encourage such wants. When man, blind to normal desires and wants rushes in for a satisfaction of unnatural cravings, punishments—apart from social or state sanctions—swiftly follow and show that Nature is truly moral and her mandates have been misheard. When the miser pines for more and more gold or when the insatiable earth hunger of the proud conqueror craves for more and more territory, Nature blushes and feels outraged and the day of retribution slowly but surely gathers in its storm.

But when all normal wants are developed on right lines—this is more or less a matter of education which is now engaging the serious thoughts of Bertrand Russel and others—man's knowledge expands and his progress becomes assured. To kill or root out wants or desires is suicidal for our growth. The gospel of the Gita is not, as is held in some quarters, a gospel of inaction or inertia but it is an intense call to duty to be regulated by our respective *Dharmas*. To get rid of all wants is really to stagnate and to die and to sink into the sentient or animal life. *

We complain of divine injustice when we suffer. But if we knew that in most cases our sufferings, when real, (for there are many imaginary sufferings begotten of our caprice or artificial desires) were only so many calls to fulfil our natures, our horizon of knowledge would then expand and flush crimson with true glory. Pining and whining will not help us in the least—such an attitude of helplessness only distances the truth from us and keeps us down in the evolutionary race. May be, we are sometimes doomed to suffer inspite of our

* [It is not to be understood that 'wants' here denote only the desire for the good things of life. For there are spiritual wants too in the shape of the desire for the realisation of Truth without which no progress is possible in spiritual life. As the highest aim of Indian society is to bring the individual to the doors of spiritual illumination, our Shastras have always encouraged the latter sort of wants and discouraged the former, since they stand in the way of spiritual progress. According to the Hindu ideal the animal wants are to be reduced to the minimum without, of course, prejudice to physical efficiency, and the spiritual wants raised to the maximum, unlike the Westerner who always strives to raise 'the standard of life' to the highest possible extent. Ed. V. K.]

keen and sincere efforts to find the proper remedies but we must remember our efforts are not wasted—they leave their effects on the race.

God is all-merciful and if we could only know and read His purpose aright, we would see that human wants, when legitimate and proper, are only so many divine goads to know Him and realise Him.

The man without wants therefore, is not to be envied but to be pitied.

A VEDIC PRAYER

By Swami Atulananda

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is one of the eleven Upanishads which are known as the ancient, genuine Upanishads. These are the classical, fundamental Upanishads on which the Vedanta philosophy is based. And these Upanishads were chosen by the great teacher Sankara for his interpretation of the Vedanta Sutras, and on each of these he has written a commentary.

Among the Upanishads some were reserved to be taught only in the forest, to students who were willing to devote their lives to the study and realisation of the highest truth, and who for this end had given up their homes and worldly connections to live in a quiet place under the guidance of a Guru, or spiritual teacher. There, in the Ashrama with their Guru, they could study and meditate without interruption. The great spiritual treasures contained in these Upanishads remained thus a secret to the ordinary man. The teachings were kept pure and holy and sacred. The truth was open to all, provided the student was willing to live a simple, holy life away from worldly distractions. For only under such conditions could the teaching bring the highest result. It was considered unwise to place these teachings before the general public, where soon they would be misinterpreted and thereby lose their high and sacred purpose.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is one of these forest Upanishads. And as the name indicates, it was considered the great forest Upanishad holding the highest rank among all the Upanishads.

The author of this Upanishad is not known. But we meet with the teachings of an ancient Rishi Yagnavalkya, a wise and holy man who even while living the householder's life came face to face with the highest truth. A great part of the Upanishad is his teaching, given out on different occasions, under quite different circumstances. Through the stories related in this Upanishad we learn something

about the life of this ancient Rishi, how he was married and had two wives, how he visited the court of King Janaka, and how towards the end of his life he left the world and became a recluse.

The Upanishad opens with a Shanti Patha, or peace chant, as all the main Upanishads do. These peace chants were uttered in chorus by Guru and disciples to create the right atmosphere. The peace chant is : "Brahman is all that is invisible and all that is visible. (Spirit and Universe). The visible projects from the invisible and again is absorbed by the invisible. Still, Brahman remains for ever unchanged. Om ! Peace ! Peace ! Peace !"

There is at the beginning of the Upanishad a beautiful prayer that is uttered by thousands of Hindus every day. It is a short prayer, but at the fulfilment of this prayer the highest aim of human life has been achieved. The prayer is :

"We pray to Thee, adorable and self-effulgent One,
From the unreal lead us to the Real,
From darkness lead us into Light,
From death lead us into Immortality."

This prayer, in ancient times, was recited at the beginning of the great Vedic sacrifices. "From darkness lead us into Light,"—through the darkness of ignorance we are attached to all that is worldly. We want health, wealth and prosperity, we want the so-called good things of this world. The light of wisdom is hidden from us. We are satisfied with the things of the senses because we do not know the bliss of That which lies beyond, of that Light which dispels all ignorance, and with it, all attachment to worldly concerns. We do not know that all happiness this world has to offer is but a faint reflection of the wondrous bliss that reposes in the Light which is God Himself. He is the true Light, the Light that shines in the darkness, the Light that can be perceived only by the spiritual eye. When that eye is opened we see the fullness of things. Then we see no more through a glass darkly, but we come face to face with the glory of the Divine. That Light is self-effulgent. The sun cannot illumine It, for the light of the sun is like darkness compared with that source of all light, which is God. "When with that Light the mind is illumined then does it see no darkness. Thus this Bliss arises in the body."

When we become conscious of that spiritual Light then we live in freedom. Then we will know that we are the children of that Light, spirit born of spirit, children of eternal bliss. When we have reached that state there is nothing more to be desired, we have reached fullness, perfection, complete happiness. Hence the prayer to be led into that Light. Lead us away from darkness, take us, O Lord, into

he Light that is Thy very being. There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor these lightnings. He shining, everything shines by His glory. By His Light all this shines."

"From the unreal lead us into the Real,"—the world is unreal. God alone is real. Everything in this world changes and comes to an end. There is no stability in the universe, nothing to hold on to. We think that we have a firm grasp on the world but before we know it, it slips away. The unreal, the changeable vanishes sooner or later. We cannot depend upon anything in this world.

Stability is only in the Real. The Real is eternal, unchangeable. The Real is God. When we enter into Him then we enter into reality, then we ourselves become real. At present we are always changing, happy to-day, miserable to-morrow. But when we are united with Reality, then we partake of His nature, of His bliss. Lead us away from the unreal world, O Lord, that we may blend with Reality, that we may become real even as Thou art real. "Subtler than the subtle, greater than the great, in the heart of each living thing the Atman reposes. One free from desires, with his mind and senses composed sees the glory of the Atman and becomes absolved from grief."

And now the last line of the prayer : "From death lead us into Immortality,"—we think that we are living, but in fact we are dying constantly. Every change is the death of a previous condition. To-morrow we shall not be what we are to-day. The body has changed. And even our ego of to-day is changed to-morrow. Every moment we are dying. The "I" of an hour ago is dead and gone, it is changed, and the present "I" has taken its place. This is the cause of our unhappiness. We don't remain the same even for a moment.

But when we escape from this constant dying, when we become immortal, then we will taste true happiness. Then all fear will vanish and we are at rest. That is the state of bliss. Bliss is only in immortality, when we are beyond all bondage, beyond all limitations.

We dread death. That dread will vanish the moment we realise that we are immortal. Then there will be no more living and dying and being born again. Until that realisation comes we will not know peace. The future will remain dark. But when we become immortal we have nothing more to fear for then we are beyond change. That fearlessness is bliss.

Even in this life we can become immortal. Not the body, but the spirit. That is, we can realize that our true nature is beyond change and death, that we are and always have been the immortal spirit. Eternity opens up before us. We enter upon the great Eternity beyond time, space and causation. When this realisation

comes we are said to be living in God, because then we know that we are of His nature. This realisation is the goal of life. It brings the greatest bliss.

It is only when the heart has become pure that we can utter this prayer in perfect sincerity, when we are free from worldly attachments, when we are ready to renounce all for the love of God, who is the highest, the reality and immortal. So long as we want to enjoy the world we cannot recite this prayer in the fullness of our hearts. The world is darkness, unreal, subject to death. God alone is Life eternal.

We cannot live in the spirit and still cling to the vanities of this earthly life. We have to choose between the darkness and light. And the right choice comes with the dawning of wisdom. Ignorance draws us away from God. Wisdom draws us towards Him. Those who have seen the light lose the love for darkness. Those who have tasted the bliss that is God can lust no more after sense pleasures. Those who have experienced immortality can no longer be satisfied with what is mortal. They cannot pray for worldly happiness and prosperity. Nothing can satisfy them except God Himself. In God alone they find their satisfaction.

Reality, Light, Immortality is the true nature of every living being. It is the Life of all life, the Soul of all souls. It is the basis of all existence. We are not these bodies, not these ever-changing personalities; we are, in truth, one with the immortal spirit. When we are freed from ignorance, when we go beyond darkness, then we will shine in our own glory which is God, beyond the confines of nature, beyond birth and death. "The Self is not born, it does not die; it did not spring from anywhere, nothing sprang from it. Unborn, eternal, everlasting, ancient; it is not slain when the body is slain. He is the Eternal among the ephemeral, the Consciousness of all conscious beings. He, though One, fulfils the desires of many. He hears our prayers, He answers our supplications."

SELECTIONS FROM THE ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

BALAKANDA : CHAPTER V

AHALYA'S PRAYER—(Continued)

जगतामादिभूतस्त्वं जगत्त्वं जगदाश्रयः ॥

सर्वभूतेष्वसंयुक्त एकोभाति भवान्परः ॥ ५२ ॥

52. Thou art the primordial cause of the universe, Thou art the universe itself as also its support : (yet) Thou art unaffected by the elements. (Hence) Thou shinest as the Absolute and Supreme Being.

ओंकारवाच्यस्त्वं राम वाचामविषयः पुमान् ।

वाच्यवाचकभेदेन भवानेव जगन्मयः ॥ ५३ ॥

53. Thou art designated by the word " Om ", yet Thou art the Being that art beyond words. In virtue of the differentiation between word and its object Thou art the universe itself.

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वफलसाधनभेदतः ॥

एकोविभासि राम त्वं मायया बहुरूपया ॥ ५४ ॥

54. Though Thou art One without a second, Oh Sri Rama ¹, in virtue of Thine Maya, Thou appearest variously as effects, cause, agent, ends and means.

[Note : 1. He is *de facto* the effect, cause, etc., of all activities visible in the relative world.]

त्वन्मायामोहितधियस्त्वां न जानन्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

मानुषं त्वामभिमन्यन्ते मायीनं परमेश्वरं ॥ ५५ ॥

55. People with (their) intellect deluded by Thine Maya recognize not Thee in reality : on the other hand they regard Thee—the Supreme Being, the Lord of Maya—as an ordinary human being.

आक्ताश्वत्त्वं सर्वत्र बहिरंतर्गतोऽमलः ।

असंगो ह्यचलो नित्यः शुद्धो बुद्धः सदव्ययः ॥ ५६ ॥

56. Like Ether (Akasa) Thou pervadest all both inside and outside—Thou the Pure, the Unattached, the Unmoving—Thou art the Eternal, the Immaculate, the Supreme Knowledge, the Existence-absolute and the Immutable.

योषिन्मूढाऽहमज्ञाते तत्त्वं ज्ञाने कथं विभो ॥

तस्मात्ते शतशोराम नमस्क्रूर्यामिनन्यधीः ॥ ५७ ॥

57. I am a woman deluded and ignorant, Oh Lord. How can I comprehend Thy real nature ? Therefore do I, Oh Rama, with an undivided mind bow down before Thee an infinite number of times.

देवमे यत्तु कुत्रापि स्थिताया अपि सर्वदा ॥

त्वत्पादकमलेसक्ता भक्तिरेवमदाऽस्तु मे ॥ ५८ ॥

58. Oh Lord ! wheresoever I may be, bless that I may have un-
ceasing devotion unto Thy lotus-feet.

नमस्ते पुरुषाय च नमस्ते भक्तवत्सल ॥

नमस्तेऽस्तु हृषीकेश नारायणनमोऽस्तु ते ॥ ५९ ॥

59. Salutations unto Thee ! Oh Thou the Lord of all creatures, the Lover of Thy devotees. Oh Hreishakesha ! Salutations again, unto Thee, Oh Narayana.

भवभयहरमेकं भानुकोटिप्रकाशं

करधृतशस्त्रापं कालमेघावभासं ॥

कनककेशचिरवस्त्रं रत्नवत्कुण्डलाढ्यं

कमलविशदनेत्रं सानुजं राममीडे ॥ ६० ॥

60. I sing Thy glory, Oh Sri Rama of beautiful lotus eyes, who art accompanied by thy brother, who art the destroyer of the fear of Samsara (i. e., bondage), who art one without a second, who art self-effulgent like the splendour of a million suns, who carriest a bow and arrow in Thy hands and shinest like a blue cloud, and who art clad in a beautiful cloth of golden hue and adorned with ear-rings imbedded with gems.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE HINDU VIEW OF CHRIST

The Christmas has long passed away with the usual jubilation and religious fervour attendant on its celebration. Although the anniversary of the nativity of Jesus does not find a place in the orthodox Hindu calendar, the occasion is nonetheless important to the minds of most Hindus ; for Jesus, the Son of God, who came down to this world of sorrows to wash away the sins of mankind with his own blood and to establish the Kingdom of God in the minds of men profoundly strikes the tender chords of our heart and impresses our minds with the purity, beauty and strength that were so conspicuously revealed through his personality. Notwithstanding the attempts of the various Christian Churches to make him and his religion sectarian, his personality which is in itself so universal has overflowed the limits of petty creeds and sects and has enlisted our adoration although we do not call ourselves his followers in the sense in which the modern Christian missionary wants us to do. What attracts us irresistibly to his person is the intense spirit of renunciation that was exemplified in his life. He was par excellence a Sannyasin who had given up all the pleasures of the world for the love of his Lord. He had no house, no wealth or relations to call his own. His life was one of perpetual communion with God and service to humanity. In the brief period of his ministry he gave out the gems of spiritual truth that he had gathered, to all who desired them. And in the end he courted martyrdom in the interest of what he considered to be truth and in atonement for the sins of mankind. This is Christ as he was, untrammelled by the prejudiced interpretations of theologians and we Hindus find in him another inspired messenger of God deserving the reverence and worship of our hearts.

But when Christian missionaries ask us to accept Christ they want us to do something more. They want us to believe in Christ not as he was, but as he is interpreted by their Church. They assume, not however on the authority of Christ himself, that he was the only Son of God and the acceptance of him as one's Lord and Saviour is the only means of salvation to man. To them, to profess Christianity seems to be of greater importance than obedience to Christ's doctrines or imitation of his life. We Hindus entirely disagree with this view. The absurdity of the doctrine will be clear from the fact that even if its truth is granted, there still remain a large section of mankind who have no prospect of salvation for no fault of theirs. For the countless generations that lived before the birth of Christ and the large section of mankind that had no opportunity to know him and his doctrines even after his birth must also be branded, if this theory is carried to its logical conclusion, as unfit for salvation, although the mistake was unavoidable on their part. Nor do we find any clear assertion of this theory in the recorded sayings of Christ. In fact his teachings even go against such sectarian views. The only tenable standpoint is to take up the Hindu view that God manifests Himself in this world in the form of man as many times as there is need for it, and that Jesus Christ is one of such manifestations of the Almighty to preach unto mankind the way of redemption from the fetters of the world. If along with this his gospel and personality are taken away from their present sectarian background, woven around him by the

theologians of Europe, and placed in the settings of Indian philosophy the Hinduisation of Christ will be completed and he will be adored by the Hindus as they do other incarnations of God. This is the only way of Indianising Christianity.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Sri Ramakrishna and His Disciples : by Sister Devāmata.
Published by the Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California

This volume, "Sri Ramakrishna and his Disciples" is the work of one who spent several years in India, living in actual daily contact with many disciples and devotees of the saint. Moreover, Sister Devāmata speaks with sympathetic understanding and a deep insight into the Indian soul, which makes the book exceptionally impressive and instructive.

Sri Ramakrishna was one of the greatest spiritual teachers of India, a Vedic seer, who taught the same as Plato and Socrates. As one reads of his teachings, life assumes a new meaning and the "hope eternal" springs refreshed. Says the author : "In Sri Ramakrishna's teachings there are no stereotyped doctrines, no creed to repeat, no catechism to learn. Upon one thing only does he lay uncompromising stress—*being* what one believes. It matters less, he claims, *what* a man worships, than in *what spirit* he worships. Growth rests less on the form of the Ideal, than on the degree of fidelity."

In another place we read, "What marks a civilized man? To be highly educated, to be rich, to be well-dressed. But the lesson Sri Ramakrishna came to teach, was that these are secondary; that a civilization based on sense pleasure, material possessions, and acquisition must be always false and hollow; that the real benefactor of mankind is he who leads a holy life, in conformity with the highest standards, and who possesses not worldly wealth, but wisdom."

A glossary of Indian terms is appended and also a list of the boyhood and religious names of the disciples. On the whole, this volume holds the interest throughout, is instructive and uplifting, without a dull page.

Outlines of Vedānta : by M. Srinivasa Rau, M.A. (Madras), M. D. C., M. B. Sc. (Edinburgh), D. P. H. (Cambridge). Printed at the Bangalore Press, Mysore Road, Bangalore City. Price Re. 1-8-0.

This book contains the Dakshinamurthy stotra of Sri Sankaracharya in Devanagari characters along with an English translation and commentary thereof. In commenting on the stotra which is a masterly epitome of the fundamental principles of Advaita Vedānta, the author has adopted it as the basis for the exposition of that philosophy. He has elucidated with great success the highly metaphysical doctrines of Advaita, and a person with an enquiring turn of mind will find it a great help in the study of that philosophy. The value of the book is enhanced by the inclusion of the views of different schools of European philosophy. The practical aspect of Vedāntic doctrines too has not been overlooked by the author.

Brahmanandiyam : edited by Swami Agamananda, Sree RamaKrishna Niranjanashramam ; Ottapalam.

This volume is a Malayalam translation of the discourses of Swami Brahmananda, originally recorded and published in Bengali and English. The Swami who was one of the most beloved disciplos of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna occupies a very high rank among the saints of Modern India. He was the President of the Ramakrishna Mission from its very inception and was held in the highest reverence and esteem by all the devotees and followers of Sri Ramakrishna. The discourses of the Swami published in this book were originally given by him as exhortations to those sincere aspirants after truth that went to him for guidance and inspiration, and as such they deal not so much with the subtleties of metaphysics that generally go to feed the intellect alone as with matters of practical spiritual life. No one can turn over the pages of this book without coming across inspiring passages that reveal the glory of spiritual life, and act as a beacon-light to the seekers after truth. Many pieces of information, supremely interesting to spiritual aspirants, concerning the practice of meditation, the pitfalls of spiritual life and the means of avoiding them are to be found in this book. Its value is enhanced by the inclusion of a biographical sketch of the Swami containing all incidents that are authentically known about his life. We feel sure that this noble attempt of the publishers will be of great service to the Malayalam-reading public.

Talks with Eeyaa. By A. H. Jaisinghani ; published by Ganesh and Co., Madras. 47 pages.

These are the musings of the innermost heart of a sincere soul, put in the shape of conversations with an imaginary being called Eeyaa who seems to be none other than the divine spirit in man. Many illuminating remarks on such abstract topics as truth, happiness, desire, service, etc., are to be found in this small volume. The thoughts expressed herein throb with the sublime spirit of humanity and an abiding faith in the underlying divinity of human nature.

Practice of Yoga Vol. 1 : by Swami Sivananda ; Ganesh and Co., Madras ; 247 pages. Price Rs. 2.

This book, as the title indicates, is a very valuable compendium of the various forms of Sadhana inculcated by the scriptures of Hinduism. All the important paths, Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga are dealt with and innumerable practices relating to these and the results to be attained by following them are minutely described in simple and lucid English. A reader on finishing the book will feel impressed that religion is a very practical affair. But we must however add that the practices of Hathayoga and Rajayoga mentioned in the book are unsuited to the majority of men in this age while they have always an irresistible charm for them by their apparent concreteness and promise of speedy rewards. The author should have given a strong note of warning regarding the dangers attendant on these practices lest the impatient but unqualified aspirants should recklessly launch on them from a perusal of the book and thus risk their health and everything in such vain efforts. In addition we should also say that a superficial reader of the book may go away with the impression that spiritual realisation is an easy thing to be accomplished in a year or two, as the author has indicated so in many places without at the same time sufficiently emphasising the fact that such speedy results are possible only in the case of aspirants of intense spiritual ardour,

But in the case of majority of men it will take many years, or perhaps a whole life-time to attain perfection in any one of these Sadhanas.

Mother America : by Swami Omkar ; Ganesh and Co., Madras.

In this small book Swami Omkar tries to defend India against the slanders recently levelled against her in the notorious book of Miss Mayo. The defence does not take the line of a tit for tat, as it is the case with some of the books written by Indians in reply to Miss Mayo's allegations. The author tries to outline in brief the beauty and sublimity of Indian life at its best, and also the mistake in the outlook with which Miss Mayo views her theme. He pleads for more sympathy and help for India at the hands of foreigners than for malicious criticism and vilification of her culture by them. The book if read widely will be helpful in creating a better state of affairs in international understanding.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE R. K. M. STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

The Silver Jubilee of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras was celebrated with great solemnity on Sunday the 16th of February, 1930 under the presidency of His Excellency the Governor of Madras. On the previous day took place the opening of the Home Exhibition by Mr. G. Nagaratnam Iyer, the Principal of the Engineering College, Madras. The Exhibition consisted of the articles produced by the various sections of the Home as the industrial section, science section, geography section, vegetable garden, etc. The variety of products and the taste and ingenuity displayed in their make bear eloquent testimony to the splendid training given to the boys for developing skill in the use of their hands and eyes. The celebration proper began with Pooja and prayer in the morning in the spacious prayer hall of the Home. At about 10 A. M. rice and pice were distributed to over one thousand poor Narayanas. In the evening was held a public meeting under the presidency of His Excellency in a specially constructed pandal decorated with buntings, arches, flags, ever-greens and mottoes of great philosophical significance. The elite of the City were present on the occasion. Among others the names of the following ladies and gentlemen may be mentioned :—Dr. Besant, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar, Sir A. P. Patro, Rev. Father Beatram, the Kumara Rajah of Venkatagiri, Dr. Gravely, the Rajah of Ramnad, Mr. and Mrs. Justice Venkatasubba Rao, Mr. and Mrs. Hayles, Messrs. C. V. Viswanatha Sastri, A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, M. A. Muthiah Chettiar, V. S. Ramaswami Sastri, K. Balasubramania Aiyar, G. Nagaratnam Aiyar, S. N. V. Rajachar, A. Krishna Rao Bhonsle, S. Satyamurthi, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar, M. Kosava Pai, Vavilla Venkatewarulu, C. R. Thiruvengkatachariar, T. S. Ramaswami Aiyar, (Dubash of Best and Co.), S. Muthiah Mudaliar (Minister), N. R. Balakrishna Mudaliar, Balaji Row, P. Chenchiah, V. C. Rangaswami, V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar and S. Rangaswami Aiyangar. The proceedings began with prayer

and the reading of the Report of the Institution by Swami Yatiswarananda, President of the R. K. Mutt and Home. This was followed by the commemoration address by Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar in the course of which he paid a high tribute to the organisers of the Home and the splendid achievement of the institution in the matter of giving an all-round training to its inmates. Next Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar requested His Excellency to present a souvenir in silver embodying the monogram of the Ramakrishna Mission to the Secretariat Party in commemoration of their devoted, unselfish and philanthropic labours for the purpose of building the financial fabric of the Home. Kumara Raja of Venkatagiri and Mr. Alladi Krishnaswamy Aiyar, the Advocate General of Madras, then requested His Excellency to lay the foundation stone for the new Jubilee workshop. In the midst of the sweet notes of Indian music His Excellency performed the pleasant function and addressed the assembled guests, appreciating the work done by the Home and asking all to contribute liberally towards its funds. In the course of his speech he said, "I have been privileged to go round the Home on a working day and I could see plainly that the education was thoroughly practical and in every way designed to fit the students for the struggle, which must necessarily lie before them. But, of course, funds are still necessary and notwithstanding the efforts that have been made to obtain sufficient funds more are still wanted. I can imagine nothing finer than to give in such a cause and I wish those who are well-endowed with this world's goods to contribute as generously as possible in response to the appeal that has been made, because I am confident that they could not have a worthier object than to assist those who are not able to afford it themselves to equip themselves for the struggle of life." After the usual vote of thanks by Mr. A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, the President of the Corporation of Madras, the Governor and his party left, the chair being occupied on His Excellency's departure by Sir A. P. Patro. An interesting programme of sports was then gone through and Sir A. P. Patro distributed the prizes among the winners in the sports as well as in the literary and oratorical competitions held some days before. With a vote of thanks to the chair, ladies and gentlemen, the meeting came to a close. At night there was Bhajana in the Home prayer hall. The function closed with a dinner and musical entertainment to the assembled guests.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SOCIETY, RANGOON

The Sixty-eighth Birthday Anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in a befitting manner on Tuesday, the 21st January. The following Sunday, the 26th January, arrangements were made in the premises of the Society's Guest House, on a very large scale to give a sumptuous meal to the poor of Rangoon numbering over 2000. The feeding lasted from early morning till late in the afternoon. A well-attended public meeting was held at 6.30 P.M. in the Raja Reddiar's High School Hall with Mr. J. Davidson, Accountant-General, Burma in the chair. The proceedings opened with a song of Vivekananda on Brahman followed by a reading of extracts from Swami Vivekananda's speeches by Master B. B. Roy. Mr. P. C. Guha, B.Sc., read a paper on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda in Bengali. He was followed by Mr. K. R. Chari, B.A., Head Master, B. E. T. High School, who gave a short biographical sketch bringing out the salient features of the great personality. Mr. I. B. Mazumdar, M.A., Lecturer,

University College, Rangoon, described the extraordinary manner in which the noble soul was born into the religious life and the manner in which the Swami entered his Mahasamadhi. The practical application of Vedanta to the ordinary life and his profound exposition of the significance of image worship in the light of Vedanta were also stressed on by the speaker. The last speaker U. Maung Maung Ji, B.A., opined that in the true appreciation of Vivekananda's message lay the salvation of nations and the solution of international problems. His message was simple in spite of the profundity of his philosophy and was applicable to the world as well as to the individual. The President in summing up paid an eloquent tribute to the amazing personality who lived far above the narrow racial and sectional bigotry and as such had an appeal for the humanity at large. Truly he was an ambassador of the religious East to the materialistic West. With a vote of thanks to the chair by Swami Shyamananda the meeting terminated late at night.

AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, BALIATI, Dacca

The Sixty-eighth Birthday Anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Baliati, Dacca on the 21st January, 1930 in a befitting manner. Prasadham was distributed and Bhajans were sung. The ceremony came to a close after Aratrikam.

The Annual general meeting of the members of the Sevashram was also held in the Sevashram premises on the same day at 5 P.M. Babu Nibaran Chandra Sarkar, B.A. L.T., was voted to the chair. The annual report of the year 1929 of the Sevashram was read and unanimously passed. Total receipts of the Mission department of the Sevashram for the year under review were Rs. 1803-10-6 and total expenditure came up to Rs. 1488-14-6 for educational, medical, charitable, library, relief works and establishment charges. Income of the Math department of the year was Rs. 1386-5-0 and the expenses for various kinds of Puja, Utsab and feeding of the poor were Rs. 1,312-8-6. Auditors for the year 1930 were duly elected; several speakers delivered lectures lucidly explaining the utility of the many-sided constructive work of the Sevashram.

AT THE MIRJAPORE H. E. SCHOOL, MYMENSING

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with due éclat at the Mirjapore H. E. School premises on the 25th January last. A largely attended public meeting was held under the presidency of Babu Fani Bhusan Sen, B.A., and Swami Sundarananda of the Ramkrishna Ashrama, Baliati (Dacca) impressively spoke for more than an hour explaining the main teachings of the great patriot saint of modern India. Babus Akhil Chandra Bhattacharjee and Monmotha Nath Sannyal and several other speakers narrated the various activities of the Swami in a very able manner. The whole thing was organised by Babu Akhil Chandra Raha Roy a devoted worker of the sub-division. After soul-stirring songs the proceedings came to a close.

AT THE SARADANANDA KUTIR, KHATRA, BANKURA

On the birthday of Swami Vivekananda about two hundred poor Narayanas were fed at the Kutir premises under the auspices of Swami Nirlepa Nanda.

REPORT OF THE
SHYAMALA TAL CHARITABLE DISPENSARY AND HOSPITAL

The 14th annual report of this dispensary shows that the number of cases treated there during the year 1928 was 1477. Situated, as the hospital is, in the midst of deep jungles stretching for miles and miles and only relieved by very sparsely populated villages here and there, the value of the work should not be gauged by the number of patients, but by the urgency of their demands and the extreme helplessness of their condition which cannot be emphasised too strongly. The simple village people having no dispensary within thirty miles, often go there from a distance of a full day's journey carrying the patients all the way on their shoulders or in doolies. To fulfil this urgent duty more efficiently the dispensary should be replenished with a better stock of medicines, instruments, appliances, etc. Above all a permanent building is required to house the dispensary and to accommodate a few in-patients. The lowest estimate for the same is Rs. 2,800 of which Rs. 200 are already in hand. Contributions may be sent to Swami Virajanda, the Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamala Tal, Deori P. O., via Champawat, Dt. Almora.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

The report of the Home for 1929, the twenty-fifth year of its career, gives a detailed account of its manifold activities and the methods of training adopted there for an all-round development of its inmates. The strength of the Home at the end of the year was 142 as against 137 in the previous year. Of these 46 were Lower Secondary students, 52 High School students, 21 College students and 23 Industrial students. The results of the public and class examinations, as shown in the Report, were satisfactory. The boys were grouped according to age and class in which they studied, into nine separate wards, each ward being under the charge of a ward master who resided either in the Home or in the new quarters built for them very near the Home. All the sections were under the general guidance of the Warden who correlated their work. A major portion of the household work and management rested with the boys themselves and this helped in promoting the dignity of labour, in inspiring self-reliance and in instilling a spirit of service into them. To develop the religious instincts in the students, the younger boys were given lessons from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the elderly students were taken through a course in the Bhagavad Gita and a comparative study of religions, while such functions as Sandhya meditation, congregational prayer, periodical Bhajanas and music classes helped not a little in giving the boys a practical training in devotional exercises. The boys attended physical training classes thrice a week in mornings at which regular training was given in the Noehren's system of drill and indigenous exercises. They were also given facilities to play organised games as hockey, cricket, etc. Boys also worked every day for half an hour in the garden which resulted in developing in them an aesthetic sense and a taste for gardening as well as in material gain to the Home in the shape of vegetables to the value of Rs. 21 per month. Other recreations and social activities consisted in the running of "Our Home Magazine", in delivering magic lantern lectures on popular subjects to the poor people of the locality and in the celebration of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and festivals like Home Day, Navaratri and others.

The Residential School attached to the Home coaches up boys for the School Final Examination. The medium of instruction adopted is Tamil in most subjects, and up to the IV form Tamil and Sanskrit are compulsory for all. The teaching work of the higher forms is confined to the forenoon sessions, the afternoon sessions being devoted either for individual work or manual training. The manual training section provides instruction in carpentry, weaving and cane work, and the total value of saleable articles produced in these different branches amounted to Rs. 300, Rs. 600 and Rs. 250 respectively.

The Industrial School providing instruction in Cabinet Making and Mechanical Foreman and Fitter's work is another unique feature of the Home. The courses of studies adopted here cover a period of five years of which the first four years are devoted to combined theoretical and practical workshop training in the school, the fifth year being given completely for workshop training. The minimum educational qualification for admission into this section is the completion of V form. No fees are charged for tuition. The strength of the school at the end of the year was 30.

As for the finances of the Home, the total receipts amounted to Rs. 47,308-4-4 and the expenditure to Rs. 49,070-4-4 resulting in a deficit of Rs. 1,762. The receipts by subscriptions amounted to Rs. 15,475-13-1 and the expenditure on the boarding of boys was Rs. 22,052-2-0 working out to an average of Rs. 13-2-0 per head per mensem. The running of the High School and Manual Training Classes cost the management Rs. 15,694-13-8 against which Teaching and Equipment grants of Rs. 9,714 were received from the Government. A sum of Rs. 11,323-4-8 was spent on the Industrial school, which included the cost of equipment also towards which a grant of Rs. 3,700, was received from the Department of Industries. The question of raising the Permanent Endowment Fund to the required amount is occupying the anxious concern of the authorities. The help of the generous public is earnestly solicited in this matter by the management.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER

ॐ

गायंति सामकुशला यमजंमन्त्रेषु
ध्यायंति धीग्मतयो यतयो विविके ।
पश्यंति योगिपुरुषाः पुरुषं शरीरे
दृग्मेवरो भवति मेऽद्य स दीनबंधुः ॥
यन्नामन्तीतिनपरः श्वपचोऽपि नूनं
हिन्वाखिलं कलिमलं भुवनं पुनाति ।
दृग्ध्वा समाश्रमखिलं कहेणक्षणेन
दृग्मेवरो भवति मेऽद्य स दीनबंधुः ॥

He the Unborn of whom the persons skilled in the chanting of the Samas sing in sacrificial ceremonies ; on whom the sages possessed of self-control meditate in solitude ; whom the Yogins realise in their own body as the Purusha ; may He, the Friend of the poor, reveal Himself unto my vision.

He, by being devoted to the singing of whose name even the unclean ones become purged of all their impurities and veritably purify the world, may He, the Friend of the poor, having burnt all my sins by His merciful glance, reveal Himself unto my vision.

SRIDINABANDHU-ASTAKAM

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA *

THE MASTER'S VISIT TO THE RESIDENCE OF
SRIJUT JAYAGOPAL SEN

II (Contd.)

VISHISHTADVAITA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Neighbour : Sir, why is the world called Maya ?

Sri Ramakrishna : So long as God is not realised, everything else is to be given up as “not this”, “not this”. Those who have attained Him know that He Himself has become everything. Then one realises that He is Maya, Jiva (soul) and Jagat (universe)—all together. If one asks you about the weight of a Vilva fruit after the shell, pulp and seeds have been separated from one another, will you leave the shell and the seeds apart and weigh the pulp alone? No. You will have to take into account the shell and seeds also along with the pulp. Then only will you be able to tell correctly the weight of the Vilva fruit. The shell is, as it were, the Jagat (universe), and the seeds the Jivas (souls). At the time of discrimination or analysis Jiva and Jagat are considered non-Atman (non-God) and hence unreal. Then the pulp alone is regarded as real, and the shell and seeds unreal. Later on, one realises that all these taken together form one whole. One knows then that the shell and seeds are made of the same substance as the pulp, and the term Vilva fruit implies all these.

“After analysis comes synthesis. Butter is inseparable from butter milk, and butter milk from butter. If there is butter milk, there must be butter also. If there is butter, there must be butter milk also. If there is the Atman (God), there must be non-Atman—Jiva and Jagat—also.

“The phenomenal world implies the Absolute; and the Absolute the phenomenal world. He who is realised

* Translated from M's diary originally published in Bengali.

as God has become Jiva and Jagat. The man of realisation sees that He alone has become everything—father, mother, child, neighbour, man, animal, good and evil, purity and impurity and everything.”

SENSE OF SIN AND RESPONSIBILITY

Neighbour : Sir, are there then no sin and virtue ?

Sri Ramakrishna : Yes, there are ; and again there are not. So long as the Lord retains the ego in the Jiva, there would remain the idea of diversity, and along with it, the sense of sin and virtue. In a very few persons only He wipes away the ego completely, and they go beyond all sin and virtue, good and evil. So long as God is not realised, there will certainly remain the conception of diversity and with it the sense of sin and virtue. You may say in so many words, “Sin and virtue have become the same to me ; I do as the Lord makes me do.” But in fact you know in your heart of hearts that those are mere words ; for whenever you do anything wrong you feel the qualms of conscience. After God is realised He may leave in the devotee the ego of a “servant” if He so wills. In that state he thinks of God as the Master and himself as His servant. Such a devotee likes to have only Divine talks and Divine service and dislikes ungodly persons and ungodly acts. So you see in such a devotee even the Lord keeps up the idea of diversity.

Neighbour : Sir, you say, “Live in the world after realising God.” Can God be realised ?

THE UNKNOWN AND THE UNKNOWABLE

Sri Ramakrishna : He cannot be known with the help of the senses or the worldly mind. But He can be known through the pure mind free from worldly desires.

Neighbour : Who is it that can know God ?

Sri Ramakrishna : Who is there to know Him as He is ? It is enough if we know Him as much as we require. The small potful of water is more than enough for me, what should I do with a well full of water ? An ant goes to

a sugar hill. What would it do with the whole hill ? One or two grains of sugar are more than enough for it.

Neighbour : We are, as it were, in a state of delirium. So like the patient how can we be satisfied with only a small potful of water ? We want a huge quantity of water. Similarly we want to know everything of God.

THE DISEASE OF THE WORLD AND ITS MEDICINE :
TAKE REFUGE IN HIM ALONE

Sri Ramakrishna : Yes, that is true. But there is the medicine for the disease too.

Neighbour : Sir, what's that please ?

Sri Ramakrishna : It is keeping the company of holy men, singing the glory of the Lord and praying to Him constantly. (Offering flowers to the Divine Mother) I prayed,—‘ Mother, I do not want (relative) knowledge. I offer to Thee all knowledge and ignorance ; dost Thou bless me with the purest devotion.’ I never asked for anything else

“Like disease, like medicine. In the Gita the Lord has said to Arjuna, ‘Do thou take refuge unto me. I will save thee from all sins.’ Take refuge unto the Lord, and He will bless you with the right understanding. He will take the entire charge of you. He will cure you of all diseases. Is it possible to know Him with our puny intellect ? Can a vessel having the capacity of one seer contain four seers of milk ? And again, is it possible to understand Him unless He gives us the understanding ? Hence I say, ‘Take refuge unto Him ; let His will be done.’ He does everything through His will. Verily, man is powerless without Him.”

PATH TO PEACE

Craving for peace and happiness is an inherent instinct of human nature. For, however much one may try to stifle the insistent cry of the inner being for peace divine, there come moments in every life when that still voice of the soul becomes distinct and audible and awakens a new aspiration for a higher condition of existence. But like the faint glimmer of a lightning flash, the light of life that at times illumines the horizon becomes again covered with the clouds of bewildering thoughts, and the life glides on along its wonted course with its usual zest for petty joys and cares. But this oblivion notwithstanding, the inner voice of the soul cannot altogether be hushed into silence; it reasserts itself and all of a sudden gives a rude shock to the rosy dreams of life and more often than not upsets the whole plan of earthly campaign. This is indeed one of the most baffling mysteries that surround the whole span of human existence, and from the dawn of creation there have been tireless attempts to solve the deep problems of life. Various schools of philosophy have also been ushered into being through this never-ending search after the light of wisdom. It is a common experience that the desire to know the fundamental verity of life is never so keen as when the sweetest and the most carefully nursed dreams of our life are smashed to pieces and the hardest knocks are received as the meed of our honest toil even at the moment of our greatest triumph. Like a pendulum our life swings between a smile and a tear. For, the ups and downs like the rise and fall of a wave on the surface of a sea are the inevitable lot of our sublunary existence. Prompted by an irresistible desire to drink the cup of life to the lees, man gets hopelessly entangled in the slough of sense-objects and feels satisfied so long as they pander to the lowest instincts of his nature. But the inevitable reaction with the consequent moral inanition sets in after a brief period of enjoyment; for this world with all the wealth of its beauty and variety can hardly satisfy the innate craving of the human soul for something real and permanent—a state of unbroken continuity of peace and happiness that knows no change or diminution under any condition of existence. This quest after peace is the spontaneous outcome of man's deep-seated love for freedom

from the bondage of the world. But very few can realise the true significance of the eternal struggle that is raging ever and anon in the inmost chamber of the human heart. Many have even drifted away into a life of rank atheism and met with a moral shipwreck in the very prime of their life. Some have carried on the struggle still further but eventually have broken down in utter despair and given up the search as an unprofitable task in life. But bolder souls there were in the past as there are in the present, whose enquiring minds could hardly be frightened by the swirling waves of the adverse forces of life or ensnared by the panorama of worldly vanities. In this life there come golden moments to these heroic souls when a part of the cloud that hides the sun-light moves away and they catch a glimpse of something beyond—away beyond its vanities, joys and sorrows. They feel that the senses are not all and that the eternal craving of the soul for peace could hardly be satisfied with the evanescent pleasures of the world. This struggle to get beyond the limitations of the senses, to grasp the Infinite—this striving after the realisation of the highest bliss—constitutes the grandest and most glorious of all the efforts that man can make. This is indeed a discontent divine that is perpetually beating in the breast of man and demanding satisfaction since time immemorial. We hear the same voice, the same impatient cry of the human soul in the sacred scriptures of the ancients :—

केनयितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रयमः प्रैति युक्तः

केनयितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥

“By whom willed and directed does the mind light on its subjects? By whom commanded does *prana*, the first move? By whose will do men speak this speech? What Intelligence directs the eye and the ear?”

कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवति ।

“What is that, OBhagavan, which being known everything becomes known.” A bolder and more tenacious soul of Nachiketa would knock even at the portal of the realm of Death in his tearing quest after Truth and would not turn away until he could wring out the deepest secrets of life from him :—

येयं प्रेते विचिक्षिप्सा मनुष्येऽस्तीत्येके नायमस्तीति चैके ।

एतद्विद्यामनुशिष्टस्त्वय ऽहं वराणामेष वरस्तृतीयः ॥

"This well-known doubt as to what becomes of a man after death,—some say he exists and some, he does not,—this I should like to know, being taught by thee. This is the third of my boons." Such are indeed the ever-recurring doubts and queries that eternally sway the human mind and it is only the boldest and the most persistent of souls that are ultimately blessed with the highest knowledge and filled with the infinitude of peace and happiness.

This search for the eternal verities of life began almost on parallel lines both in the external and the internal worlds. Grand and marvellous were the answers the seeker got from the outside Nature. But the Indian mind could hardly remain satisfied with the profound truths snatched from the bosom of the external world. It wanted to search further and dived deep into its own soul. The Upanishads the treasure house of the accumulated wisdom of the ancient saints and seers reveal the gradual working of the human minds towards higher and higher ideals till the ultimate goal of human aspiration is reached. It is under the impulsion of the human soul to grasp the Infinite, to rise to the highest altitude of life, in short, to realise the fundamental unity of being, that the minds of humanity have threaded different paths. The desire of an Alexander or a Hannibal, of a Caesar or a Napoleon to conquer the world, the silent application of a scientist in the sanctum sanctorum of his laboratory to compel Matter to reveal its secrets, the untiring nocturnal vigil of an astronomer in the sequestered nook of his observatory with his eagle-eye turned upon the sky to peer into the mysteries of the region above, the abstraction of a philosophic soul rapt in the thought of human destiny, 'the madding crowd's ignoble strife' to meet the daily needs of a starving life and the heart-rending cry of a God-loving soul for the vision divine,—all are but attempts to satisfy the hunger of the soul and represent, however crudely, the varied expressions of the same supreme urge to know the ultimate Truth of human existence. That single impulse expresses itself in a variety of forms and seeks satisfaction in multiple ways. There is no end of this quest—no solution of the complex problems of life until unity is realised in the diversity of things. For duality on any plane of human consciousness is associated with fear and pain. So the scripture also says:—

"द्वितीयात् वै भयं भवति ।" "उदरमन्तरं कुरुते त्रयं तस्य भयं भवति ।"

"Fear comes from a sense of duality." "Even the slightest sense of differentiation (in the Atman) causes fear." The giant minds of the sages of the Upanishads therefore plunged into the depth of the human soul and sought the solution of life's problems from within. They emerged from their bold striving after Truth with a soul-stirring message of hope and inspiration and proclaimed with all the force of their realisation the grandest experiences of their spiritual life. Their message comes to our ears even to-day ringing through the silence of centuries, from the dim past ages and enkindles a new hope in the breast :—

“श्रुण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा अग्रे धामानि दिव्यानि तस्थुः ।

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।

तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यते अयनाय ॥”

“न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।

तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥”

“भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात्तपति सूर्यः ।

भयादिन्द्रश्चावायुश्च मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ॥”

“Hear, ye children of Immortal Bliss, ye residents of region celestial ! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, and effulgent as the burning sun. Knowing Him alone, ye shall be saved from death once for all ; for there is no other way than this for the attainment of Bliss Eternal.” “There the sun shineth not, nor the moon and the stars. There even the lightning flasheth not, what to speak of fire. All shineth after Him who shineth. All this is illumined by His radiance.” “From fear of Him the fire burns ; from fear the sun shines ; from fear, Indra and Wind, and Death the fifth speed.” Thus the seers of India came face to face with the cosmic Intelligence the primordial Cause of all causes and rose ultimately to the apprehension of their own identity with the Supreme Brahman.” “एतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत सत्यं आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो ।”—“All this visible world is the Atman—the Truth. Thou, O Shetaketu, art That.” This indeed is one of the grandest of all truths revealed unto humanity—a truth that proclaims the eternal freedom of the human soul and its potential divinity and identity with the Brahman Absolute.

But they did not stop merely with the announcement of this profound truth of human existence. The various paths suited to the different temperaments of the aspirants were also outlined in

all their minutest details. Human mind is but a storehouse of manifold Sanskaras and every individual chalks out his own line of action in accordance with the particular type of thought that predominates in him. The grandest idea in the religion of the Vedanta is that all individuals are able to reach the same goal by following any one of the paths that have been broadly generalised in the scripture into four—*viz.*, those of Jnana (knowledge), Karma (work), Bhakti (devotion), and Yoga (psychology). But it must be borne in mind that “these divisions are not very marked and quite exclusive of each other. Each blends into the other. But according to the type which prevails we name the divisions. It is not that you cannot find a man who has no other faculty than that of work, nor that you cannot find men who are more than devoted worshippers only, nor that there are not men who have more than mere knowledge. These divisions are made in accordance with the type or the tendency that may be seen to prevail in a man.” As a matter of fact, amplest scope has been provided in the scriptures for the fullest culture of the latent powers of the human mind. But such is the irony of fate, we are being constantly led away from the true orbit of our life by the will-o’-the-wisp of worldly pleasures, and receiving hard knocks in return. The scriptures have traced all our misery and bitterness in life to our attachment to the transient conditioned existence, and it is needless to emphasise that we have no hope of catching even a glimpse of that Infinite Freedom beyond so long as we struggle to cling to the little joys and pleasures of life. It is only by giving up our attachment to this little universe of the senses or of the mind—this little life—that we can attain to that freedom which is the goal of the noblest aspirations of mankind. “The old man must die”—so did the old Christians say. In fact this little individuality of man that seeks its satisfaction in the little universe of the senses must die, and it is only by dying that we can live. The selfishness of man that shows itself in thousand and one acts of pettiness—in acts that are calculated to feed his own limited notion of happiness—must die, must go for ever; for real religion begins where this little universe of the senses ends. Sense-bound, we more often than not forget that the more we destroy the tendency to project the tentacle of selfishness, the more we advance on the path of true and ever-lasting happiness and absolute fearlessness. ‘All misery comes from fear, from

unsatisfied desire.' In fact fearlessness is the spontaneous outcome of this spirit of selflessness. And so the scripture has said :—सर्वं वस्तु भयान्वितं भूवि नृणां वैराग्यमेवाभयम्—“Everything in this life is fraught with fear. It is renunciation alone that makes one fearless.” Thus by giving up our attachment to the world of petty joys and pleasures we are able to transcend the urgent claims of the flesh and the senses and be absolutely fearless. As a matter of fact this self-abnegation or non-attachment is the keynote of a spiritual life and forms the cardinal feature of all the four paths mentioned above. Whether a man follows the path of Jnana, Karma, Bhakti or of Yoga, he must cultivate this spirit of selflessness and kill the little self. The death of this individuality is nothing but the expansion of the self into the Infinitude of Brahman which is the true nature or individuality of man. The scripture by a beautiful analogy has shown how man through sheer ignorance considers himself subject to all limitations and becomes a prey to manifold sorrows and troubles. It says :—

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिपश्यतः ।

तयोऽन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकरोतीति ॥

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुद्यमानः ।

जुष्टं यदा पश्यन्न्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥

“Two inseparable companions of fine plumage perch on the self-same tree. One of the two feeds on the delicious fruit. The other not tasting of it looks on. On the self-same tree, the Jiva drowned, as it were, and perplexed, grieves owing to helplessness. But when he sees the other, the lord who is worshipped by all, and his glory, he becomes absolved from grief.” Thus the Jiva (the lower bird) considers himself through ignorance quite distinct from the Atman (the higher bird) and eats the bitter and sweet fruits of life while the Atman does not eat fruits sweet or bitter but is immersed in its own transcendent glory—self-contained and self-satisfied. With the ever-recurring glimpses of the Reality the Jiva (the lower bird) goes nearer and nearer to his real Self (the higher bird) and at last finds that the light from the higher bird is playing round his own plumage. He did not really exist. It was only the reflection of the other bird (the Atman).

It is the popular belief that the effacement of one's individuality in a process of self-realisation is a veritable suicide. But very few are fully cognisant of the real nature of this lower self. It is the product of the accumulated impressions gathered through varied experiences from birth to birth. This lower ego or the mind as it is called is *ipso facto* the seat of all tendencies and creative ideations, and much of human energy is dissipated in the vain pursuit of the fleeting joys of the world. As a matter of fact, it is not by dissipation but by conservation of human powers that the real fount of joy can be reached. But to restrain the outgoing tendencies and conserve them into a dynamo is more difficult and conducive to the generation of strength than to allow them to fritter away in pursuit of earthly enjoyment. So has Swami Vivekananda said that "self-restraint is a manifestation of greater powers than all outgoing action. A carriage with four horses may rush down a hill unrestrained, or the coachman may curb the horses. Which is the greater manifestation of power, to let them go or to hold them? A cannon-ball flying through the air goes a long distance and falls. Another is cut short in its flight by striking against a wall, and the impact generates intense heat. All outgoing energy following a selfish motive is frittered away; it will not cause power to return to you, but if restrained it will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or a Buddha." But the sense-bound people can hardly see anything beyond their immediate horizon of life, and sink down in utter despair when failure or misery stares them in the face. Struggle, both mental and physical, is the *sine qua non* of the realisation of the highest ideal of life—the ideal of absolute freedom—of Supreme Peace and Bliss—which consists in the knowledge of the real nature of man and his relation to God and the universe. And in this mystic struggle for the realisation of the ideal, nothing is more essential than the control of the mind that wants to get outside, to peer out of the body through the windows of the senses. Religion is not merely an intellectual assent to a certain set of dogmas or the observance of rituals. Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man and in this process of manifestation the greatest and the most primary task of every aspirant is to focus all attention on the subtle working of the mind and to watch with the keenest vigil the manifold tendencies that attempt to drag him away

from the pursuit of his ideal. The control of the mind has therefore been emphasised as the essential feature in the practice of religion. So does the scripture say :—

आत्मानं रयिनं विद्धि शरीरं रयमेव तु ।

बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥

इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।

आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तृत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥

यस्तु विज्ञानवान्भवत्युक्तेन मनसा सदा ।

तस्येन्द्रियाण्यवश्यानि दृष्टाश्चाद्व सारथेः ॥

विज्ञानवानसारथिर्यस्तु मनः प्रग्रहवान्नरः ।

सोऽध्वनः परमाप्नोति तद्विष्णोः परमे पदम् ॥

“Know the Atman as the lord of the chariot, the body as only the chariot. Consider the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind the reins. The senses, they say, are the horses, and their roads are the sense-objects. The wise call Him the enjoyer (when He is) united with the body, senses and mind. For him who is not possessed of discrimination, and whose mind is always uncontrolled, the senses are not controllable as wicked horses of a driver. *But the man who has a discriminating intellect for the driver and a controlling mind for the reins, attains the end of the journey, that supreme place of Vishnu.*” For, far beyond the senses, the mind and the intellect in the innermost sheath of golden hue is that stainless indivisible Brahman, the pure, the light of all lights. That is what the knowers of the Atman know. And when He that is both high and low is seen, the knot of the heart is untied; all doubts are solved; and all his Karma is consumed.

The greatest victory that humanity can achieve and which is worthy of the highest endeavour is the victory in the realm of the spirit. Mighty empires can be built on the strength of the sword; powerful nations may even be conquered by the force of arms but a single freak of Nature can pulverize into atoms the most splendid handiwork of man. But there is no power on earth that can dislodge a realised soul from the throne of his spiritual empire when he is fully established there. Bold and firm, he stands under all circumstances with the knowledge of Brahman burning undimmed in the realm of his heart. This

is in fact the greatest empire that a human soul can aspire to and this is the mightiest of all the forces that humanity is heir to. But this life of spiritual culture is not a smooth sailing. There are many boulders in the sea of life and none but the cautious and experienced pilot can steer clear of the unknown dangers lying hidden under the surface of the sea. There are, besides, moments of depression ; failure is not unoften the guerdon of honest endeavour. But under all conditions of life the aspirant must make a bridge of all successes and failures in life and forge ahead with steady and unfaltering steps relying on the strength of his own Atman. For it is one's own Atman that is the greatest friend of one and one must look within for inspiration and guidance. So does the Bhagavad Gita say:—

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुगत्मेव रिपुगत्मेन ॥

“Let self in man be raised by Self
Let him not make a hell for self.
For Self alone is self's true friend :
Self also is the foe of self.”

It is only the tireless self-effort that brings victory at the feet of the aspirant. The priceless treasures of life lie hidden behind the screen of our mental horizon. The scriptures have again and again pointed out the hidden secrets of our life—the fount of Peace and Joy everlasting—and warned us also against the dangers that beset the path. The heroic ones who can advance with heart within and God overhead in the teeth of all the adverse forces of life are alone blessed with the vision of that Infinite Peace and Beauty at the dawn of which the poet is struck dumb, the painter's pencil drops from his hand, and the sculptor stands motionless, and they sing with proud elation:—

“Calmed are the clamours of the urgent flesh ;
Hushed is the tumult of the boastful mind ;
Cords of the heart are loosened and set free,
Unfastened are the bondages that bind,
Attachment and Delusion are no more.”

OM SHANTIH ! SHANTIH !! SHANTIH !!!

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

By R. Venkanna, B. A., L. T.

[The writer of this article had the privilege of sitting at the holy feet of the Swami in Castle Kernan in Madras during the year 1903, and he got most of his doubts cleared up. As the writer could not attend the Swami's classes, he missed much valuable information, and had to be satisfied with the printed lectures of the Swami. The last interview the Swami gave to the writer was in the year 1910 at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basuvangudi, Bangalore City. The interview lasted for more than an hour in one afternoon, and the Swami who was then suffering from consumption and very severe cough answered all the questions put to him on the Vedanta and the Puranas, and manifested his gracious nature in spite of his incurable malady.]

Swami Ramakrishnananda was known as Sasi Bhushana Chakravarti before he became an ardent admirer and devoted disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, in Bengal. He was called Sasi by his Gurudeva and Gurubhais. He was born in the year 1863 of very orthodox Brahmin parents. The father, Iswara Chandra Bhattacharya, was a devout worshipper of Kali, the Blissful Mother of the universe. In the year 1902 when Swami Vivekananda thought of worshipping Kali, he sent for Swami Ramakrishnananda's father. The son had fully inherited his father's devotion, and he used to worship the Divine Mother every year during the Dasara for twenty-four hours at a stretch—from six o'clock in the morning till six o'clock of the next morning without moving from his seat at the lotus feet of the Blissful Mother during the whole period of worship. He had a sound mind in a sound body. He was tall and robust, and had a very commanding personality. Strange to say, even his strong body could not long maintain its vigour owing to the very heavy work which he had continually to do from 1897-1911. In 1910 he had an attack of consumption, which made him unfit for continuing classes on the Gita, the Upanishads and the Bhagavatam in different parts of the city of Madras. He had to take rest, and was succeeded by Swami Sharvananda in 1911. Very often Sasi Maharaj had to cook his food, and deliver two or three lectures in Madras on the same day.

As a student, he was very hard working and intelligent, and had such concentration of mind that he could master even the most difficult subjects of study very easily. He was fond of Mathematics, Literature (both English and Sanskrit), History, Science, Philosophy and Religion. Even long after he had become a Sannyasin, whenever he could find some leisure, he would read Sir Walter Scott's Novels and work hard problems in Trigonometry. He would always keep the mind engaged in some useful work. He was a profound scholar

in Sanskrit, and had a thorough knowledge of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Brahma Sutras and the various Puranas.

Like all college students at Calcutta at the time, he was surrounded by an atmosphere of materialism and scientific scepticism. In his college days he was a tutor to a son of Keshab Chandra Sen the famous Brahmo leader, and became a member of the Brahmo Samaj. As the Brahmos wished to revise Hinduism and do away with caste and all ceremonial forms of worship, and emphasise only the formless aspect of God which can be prayed to and meditated upon, they were not able to satisfy all types of mind even among the educated classes. The explanations offered by the famous Brahmo leader on religious topics were not quite satisfactory to Sasi Bhushana Chakravarti, and so he was on the look-out for some Mahapurusha or sage who could clear up his doubts and difficulties. He and his cousin Sarat Chandra Chakravarti were living and studying together in Calcutta. They heard at this time (1893) that a Paramahansa was living at Dakshineswar, about five miles from Calcutta, and that he could clear up all doubts in religious matters. One day both of them went to see Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Dakshineswar, and were quite satisfied with his teachings and manifestations of Divine power.

No one can see God even by reading all the sacred scriptures of the world, and no problems of life and death and supersensuous perception can be solved thereby. One has to seek a Guru who has realised God, and serve him with unselfish devotion; it is by such a Guru's grace that one can get all doubts cleared up, and can see God.

Sri Ramakrishna being a Jnani, Bhakta, Yogi, Karmi, etc.,—a perfect harmony of all types in one—could be the ideal teacher of humanity for all time. He could know by looking at any one's eye all about his or her past, present and future. So he was able to adapt his teaching to the nature and capacity of those that came to him for enlightenment. And therefore he would never give the same teaching to all indiscriminately. When he saw Sasi Bhushana Chakravarti and Sarat Chandra Chakravarti, he at once said that they were both followers of Christ in a previous incarnation. Of course such statements never appeal to scientists, and they have no faith in many births. If ordinary mortals cannot read their own past, they have no right to disbelieve those sages who can read the past, present and future of every being. It is a spiritual truth that every one will know all about one's previous births only in one's last birth. But there is no such thing as last birth in the case of God, as he has to incarnate whenever Dharma declines and Adharma prevails.

Sri Ramakrishna passed away in the year 1886 after fifty years of earthly existence, and during the years 1883-1886 Sasi Bhushana Chakravarti was now and then coming to Dakshineswar, and learning spiritual truths at the feet of his Gurudeva. During summer, Gurumaharaj was fond of taking ice, and so during one of his visits to Dakshineswar, Sasi tied a lump of ice in his cloth, and travelled all the distance from Calcutta to Dakshineswar on foot in the hot midday sun, thinking that he should reach Dakshineswar as quickly as possible, and present to Gurudeva the ice which he liked most. It never occurred to Sasi that the ice might melt on the way and that his trouble might be in vain. Strange to say, the lump had not melted at all. This is proof positive that intense devotion to God or Guru works miracles.

In the year 1886 when Sri Ramakrishna was at Cossipoor Garden, and was suffering from a serious throat complaint, which was the result of talking to devotees, disciples and admirers for about twenty-hours out of the twenty-four each day for several months, Sasi and a few other disciples gave up going to their homes, and stayed all the time with their Guru attending to his needs and comfort with perfect devotion both day and night by turns. Sasi was attending on the Guru at the time of his passing away, and saw with his own eyes all that happened to the Gurudeva; he has also described in detail all the incidents in connection therewith; and he has said that he never saw Gurudeva more happy, calm and cheerful than on the day of his throwing away the mortal coil. Sri Ramakrishna then appeared like a child smiling and about to be taken up by the Divine Mother in Her arms. The Master did not feel any excruciating pain at the time of death; on the other hand, every disciple and devotee actually saw the eternal bliss of the Master, and the supreme joy that he felt as an innocent child of the Blissful Mother of the universe.

After the passing away of the Master, some of his disciples gave up the idea of returning to their homes, and took up Sannyasa, and lived together at the Baranagore Math under the benign leadership of the pet disciple of Gurumaharaj—Swami Vivekananda, who looked after their physical comforts and spiritual Sadhanas. When they all left the Math, where they were living together, with the object of either visiting important places of pilgrimage or practising religious austerities in the Himalayas, there remained only one in the Math—Sasi—for nearly twelve years conducting the daily worship of Gurumaharaj there and practising meditation. It was this extreme self-sacrificing devotion of Sasi that got him the name of Ramakrishnananda from Swami Vivekananda, who gave each disciple of Gurudeva, a new name when they took up Sannyasa. Swami Vivekananda had

thought of taking the name of Ramakrishnananda for himself, being the pet disciple of the Master, but when he found that Sasi deserved the name better than himself, he freely gave it to him.

When Swami Vivekananda returned from the West in 1897 after defending and upholding the glory of Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in the United States of America in September 1893, and after delivering a number of lectures on Vedanta and starting Vedantic centres both in America and England, he thought he should take up the work of India and organise religious centres in different parts of it to teach Vedanta—the life-giving and man-making religion—to the Indians, and to remove their physical intellectual, moral and spiritual ignorance and misery in all forms.

Swami Vivekananda never wanted to make a new sect in the name of Sri Ramakrishna, and so he told his Gurubhais to remember the life of the Master and follow his universal and unsectarian teachings, which were as broad as the sky and as deep as the ocean. Swami Vivekananda, being the mouth-piece of Gurumaharaj, taught only what Gurudeva had taught or would have taught himself. Swami Ramakrishnananda too taught only universal verities of religion like his Gurudeva.

Swami Vivekananda specially chose Sasi to organise a centre in Madras, and open Ashramas and Maths in the Deccan and also in Burma. Swami Ramakrishnananda at once commenced his work in Madras in right earnest, and gradually enlightened the educated public of Madras on all questions of God, soul and nature by holding regular classes in different quarters of the city and lecturing on the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, Brahma Sutras, Bhagavatam, etc. As time went on, he opened Ashramas and Maths in various important places and made arrangements for the spread of the Vedanta. He would never touch any coin or money, and he kept the vow to the end. He was very orthodox and defended all the scriptures of the world. The Swami passed away in Calcutta in 1911 after fourteen years of very hard work in Southern India.

Sister Devamata who stopped in Madras for two years as the guest of Sasi Maharaj, and learnt many things in connection with the Vedanta from him has published some works containing her experiences in India in general, and in Madras in particular.

Swami Ramakrishnananda was to Sri Ramakrishna, what Hanuman was to Sri Ramachandra. The Swami has published most of his important lectures, and some class talks have appeared in monthly magazines. His unselfish work is destined to bear everlasting good fruits. He was a man of the highest realisation, and every word that he uttered or wrote is pure truth. He taught the

most abstruse metaphysical things in the simplest way, for he knew them so well. His words and sentences could be understood in only one way, and that the true way. This was an advantage which helped many to understand many things in the shortest time. Like his Gurudeva, he adapted his teaching to the student's nature and attainments. No energy of his was ever wasted. He became so popular that he was almost worshipped as a saint.

Some of the teachings of Swami Ramakrishnananda may be mentioned here for the benefit of the aspirants after truth :—

1. Regard God as the highest, and give up everything for the sake of God.

2. Practise meditation on God every day.

3. Love all, teach all, and take every one to the highest goal, viz., realisation of God, irrespective of caste, creed, sect or nationality.

4. Forgive and forget all injuries received from others.

5. Take every one where he or she stands, without blaming them for their worldly or spiritual poverty and ignorance, and help them on until each one realises the highest Jnanam, Bhakti, eternal freedom and bliss—in fact, until each one realises the supreme goal.

6. All privileges must go, except the privilege of unselfish service to humanity with supreme devotion and love.

7. No one, according to the highest truth inculcated in the Vedanta, is superior to another, for the same God resides in all. Therefore, hate none.

8. It is the function of education and religion to help each one so as to manifest completely that perfection and divinity which is already inside each one, and which is one's inalienable birthright.

9. The difference between man and man is not one of kind, but of degree; one manifests more of divinity than another; and the purest soul manifests most. Men like Sri Ramakrishna only appear to be men, but in reality they are ever living in the highest spiritual plane holding communion with God, entirely forgetful of their body, mind and ego. When such come down to a lower plane, they begin to teach spiritual truths, and immediately after fly back to God, whom they never forget even in their dreams. Such men are the salt of the earth, as it is said in the Bible. God sends such men to each part of the earth whenever there is need. So no one need fear that God forgets us—poor mortals.

10. God will surely come to each one of us if we only earnestly and sincerely pray to Him as Prahlada did.

11. God is all-powerful and all-gracious, and ever ready to help each one of us; and it is our fault if we forget Him, and love only transient pleasures of the external world.

12. We can never love God and the world, and hope to see Him.

13. The perfect Jnani sees nothing but God; whereas the best Bhakta is ever with God.

14. One should realise God first, and forsake one's individual salvation and live to enjoy the purer pleasure of doing good to the world like Lord Buddha.

15. Jnanam is great, but it cannot by itself give everlasting peace.

16. Unselfish devotion and service to a Mahapurusha or all-knowing sage can alone give eternal peace.

17. Do good and be good, and thus escape all evil and suffering.

18. Evil is ultimately good, for without evil we cannot think and find ways and means of overcoming it. Because much of our knowledge consists in defining evil and finding its remedy, the existence of evil is a means of enriching our knowledge. There would be no progress, no civilisation if there were no evil. The highest knowledge and experience will be necessary to combat evils and successfully overcome them. Evils are thus at the very foundation of our wisdom. Therefore we ought not to complain of evils, but be grateful to them.

19. Good and evil are obverse and reverse of the same coin as it were; for what is good under one set of conditions is bad under a different set of conditions. It is good for a healthy athlete to consume much ghee, but it is death to a typhoid patient to consume the same quantity. Hence in reality nothing is really good or bad. It depends entirely upon circumstances.

20. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita, evil is the result of our work done with attachment to fruits. If we work without attachment, then we suffer no misery. Do any amount of good to the world, but be not attached. Do not expect any personal profit of any sort; be absolutely unselfish—this is the advice of Sri Krishna.

21. God-realisation can come only during moments of intense misery and suffering. So we ought not to fear misery in any form, but ought to welcome it and manifest our infinite power of resistance and endurance.

22. Immortality can be reached by renunciation alone, and never by works, progeny or wealth. So any search after worldly treasure or heavenly pleasure is not the right way to secure eternal life, knowledge and bliss. We have to renounce everything that is ephemeral and think of God only all the twenty-four hours of the day for ever and ever, and then only God will be pleased to confer on us Satchidanandanam or eternal life knowledge and bliss.

23. God is very hard to please. He is pleased only by those who manifest the maximum amount of purity, humility and unselfish love, and He tests each applicant to His grace and mercy by inflicting the most diabolical misery on him, and at last saves those who exhibit supernatural patience, perseverance and uncomplaining obedience to His Will. This being God's nature, there is no use of our blaming it. We should, like Christ, ever say "Thy will be done."

24. Both good and evil exist only in the mind, and not outside in the external world; and so if we wish to kill evil alone or good alone it is impossible, and therefore we shall have to kill both good and evil, *i. e.*, we shall have to kill our mind, and then only we shall be eternally conscious of our infinite nature which is all-blissful. This is the view of Vedanta.

25. Egoism is the most persistent and obstinate Devil in us; and unless we receive help from God, we cannot conquer the Devil. Unless we conquer the Devil in us—the old Adam in us, selfishness in us, our lower nature—we cannot see God. The moment egoism dies or is rendered powerless, we have the vision of God.

26. No man can be completely satisfied unless he can live for ever, and unless he can know everything, and also unless he can be happy for ever and ever. This state can be attained by one and all by the practice of Raja Yoga under the guidance of an experienced Yogi. This is the method best suited to all atheists, agnostics and pure materialists.

27. Lord Buddha declared that Nirvana is the end of sorrow, and that every one can realise that state by means of the highest Jnanam. Without Jnanam, evil cannot be destroyed. To get the highest Jnanam we must "be good and do good" to all men and animals.

28. Ahimsa or non-injury by thought, word and deed will lead every one, as the Jains say, to the supreme goal.

THE VAISESHIKA SYSTEM

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.

The Vaiseshika system of Kanada is so called because it deals specially with *Visesha* a particularity, *viz.*, the pluralism of souls and of atoms. It is the philosophy of distinctions and particularisations. It aims at analysis rather than at synthesis. It gives battle to Buddhistic phenomenalism while it accepts the Buddhist view that there are two sources of truth, *viz.*, perception and inference; it affirms that souls and objects are facts and not mere mental states. It is similar to the Nyaya system in its views about the self and in its atomic theory of the universe but it stresses more the categories of the universe and works out more fully the atomic theory of the universe. Prastapada's *blashya* on the Vaiseshika Sutras of Kanada is as famous as Vatsyayana's *blashya* on the Nyaya Sutras of Gautama.

The Vaiseshika system admits four kinds of right knowledge, *viz.*, perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*laingika*), remembrance (*smriti*) and intuitive and superconscious experience (*arshajnana*). It admits Yogic perception which leads to the experience of the soul (*atmapratyaksha*). It includes within inference three other sources of knowledge, *viz.*, comparison (*upamana*), tradition (*aitihya*), and scripture (*shabda*). Both the Nyaya and the Vaiseshika attribute the truth of scripture to the inspired perception of truth by the sages and their transmission of the same in unbroken succession. The four varieties of invalid knowledge are doubt (*samsaya*), misconception (*viparyaya*), indefinite knowledge (*anadhyavasaya*), and dream (*swapna*).

The Vaiseshika doctrine affirms a sixfold classification of *Padarthas* (categories), *viz.*, *Dravya* (substance), *Guna* (quality), *Karma* (activity), *Samanya* (genus), *Vishesha* (species), and *Samavaya* (inherence or inseparability). Later Vaiseshika expounders such as Sridhara and Udayana and Sivaditya added to these *abhava* (non-existence) as an additional category. Kanada affirms that substance and quality and action have an objective existence, and that *Samanya* and *Vishesha* and *Samavaya* are logical categories (*buddhyapeksham*) but are real and not merely subjective or *Sunya*. It says clearly that *dravya* (substance) is objective and that the Buddhistic view that there is no substance apart from its qualities is opposed to our direct and intimate experience. The substances are earth (*prithvi*), water (*apah*), light (*tejas*), air (*vayu*), ether (*akasa*), time (*kala*), space (*desa*), self (*atman*), and mind (*manas*). Thus the Vaiseshika system is not materialism because it affirms non-material substances like souls. It says that earth, water, air, fire and mind are atomic (*anu*) while time, space, Akasa, and Atma are *vibhu* (infinite and pervasive).

The Vaiseshika view of the soul is similar to that of the Nyaya and is equally defective. It says that the soul, in its natural state is devoid of intelligence and has cognition only when it is connected with the body. It affirms, like the Nyaya, a plurality of souls, and says that the number of souls is infinite. It affirms also Iswara (God) like the Nyaya system. The attempt of some modern savants to deny this and say that Kanada does not mention God at all cannot be regarded as successful (see the sutras I, 1, 3, and X, 2, 9.). But God is not given any important place in the system.

In the system of Kanada, the distinguishing doctrine is that of the Anus, atoms. His theory of Anus is parallel to the theory of the Tanmatras in the Samkhya philosophy. He says that the atom (*paramanu*) and the *Doyanuka* (double atom or dyad) are invisible while the *tryanuka* or *trisarenu* (triad), consisting of three *doyanukas*, is visible and are of the size of a mote in a sunbeam. Max Muller points out that this view is not found in Greek atomic theory and that the Vaiseshika system was not derived from a Greek source. Further, the Greek philosophers say that atoms have only quantitative differences and not qualitative differences. According to Kanada they have qualitative differences also. Dr. Radhakrishnan points out also that "for Democritus and Epicurus, the atoms are by nature in motion while for Kanada they are primarily at rest." He says also, "Another fundamental difference between the two lies in the fact that while Democritus believed it possible for atoms to constitute souls, the Vaiseshikas distinguish souls from atoms, and regard them as co-eternal existences. The Greek atomists developed a mechanical view of the universe, God being banished from the world...The atomistic view of the Vaiseshika is thus coloured by a spiritual tendency which is lacking in the Greek counterpart of it."

The atomic theory held the field in the world of thought for centuries till modern science has replaced atoms by infinitesimal centres of electric energy as the ultimate constituent of the universe. The atom has now broken up into electrons, each atom being regarded as a system of electrons. Thus matter has not only been explained but has been explained away as electricity, as wittily observed by Mr. Balfour. But the fact that Indian thought adumbrated the atomic theory in a profoundly modern way many centuries ago is a most noteworthy fact.

The defects of the Vaiseshika doctrine are varied and obvious. It attributes pleasure, pain, desire, hatred and effort, besides knowledge to the soul. It says that the soul is in itself *jada* (devoid of consciousness). It attributes the cosmic order to a power called *adrishta*. It does not attribute such cosmic order to the will or *Sankalpa* of

God. It does not give God any high and exalted place in the scheme of things. It has not realised and affirmed His immanence and transcendence and supreme glory. By emphasising Anus and Adrishta, it failed to stress the glory and power of God adequately. It describes beatitude as freedom from Gunas and not as a state of absolute and eternal bliss (ananda). Dr. Radhakrishnan says well, "An atomistic pluralism is not the final answer to the intellectual demand for a rational interpretation of the universe. The Vaiseshika view has been keenly criticised and overthrown in Sri Sankaracharya's *Bhashya* on the Vedanta Sūtras.

THE IDEAL BEFORE US*

By Srimat Swami Shivananda

To-day is a very auspicious day. It is the birthday of Hari Maharaj. He was a great soul, pure and holy like Shukadeva. From his early age he used to study the Gita, Vivekachudamani and other scriptures. Then he knew by heart. He was a Yogi and ascetic, and was by nature contemplative and fond of solitude.

Swami Vivekananda took him to America after great persuasion. As Hari Maharaj was orthodox, he did not readily agree to go to America. But he loved Swamiji so much that he could not but yield to his request. He lived in the West for nearly three years. By contact with him the lives of several persons were completely changed. On his way back to India he heard of the passing away of Swamiji, and was overpowered with grief. He had a great desire to meet Swamiji and open his heart to him. But he was sorely disappointed. After a short stay at Belur he left for Brindavan. Five years he spent in those parts. At Bulandshar, Nangal (near Hardwar) and other places on the banks of the Ganges he devoted himself to spiritual practices for a long time.

What a great love he had for the Order! He felt it had been formed through the will and command of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He knew how deeply Swami Vivekananda also loved the Order. And the instructions he had left for promoting its well-being were very dear to his heart. During the last days of his life at Benares, even though he was ill, he wonderfully worked for the good of many people.

* Substance of a talk given in Bengali at the Belur Math on the 14th January, 1930 in connection with the birthday celebration of Srimat Swami Turiyananda, known as Hari Maharaj—one of the greatest of the monastic disciples of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna.

In his life there was not the slightest blemish. It was full of virtue, purity and holiness. It was an embodiment of Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and Yoga. The duty of you all lies in cultivating his virtues. This without doubt will enable you to elevate yourselves.

How intensely Swami Brahmananda loved him! They lived together for five years in the Panjab, Sindh, Rajputana and other places. They were very intimate with each other; but yet, while living together Hari Maharaj would sometimes, remain silent without exchanging a single word with Swami Brahmananda, may be, even for several days without a break! Swami Brahmananda used to say that at times it was impossible to understand the moods of Hari Maharaj.

Look back a little. You will find that this Order and its activities are not being led by the whim and fancy of anybody. They had their beginning at Cossipore in the service rendered to the Master during his illness. The doctors asked us to serve him heart and soul. Many of us were students, and some left off their studies and nursed him by turns. This service brought us all together and led to the origin of the Order.

How shall we realise the Truth?—this was the uppermost thought in the mind of Swami Vivekananda. He travelled far and wide; and when he went to Madras, he saw the distinction between the Brahmin and the Shudra, between the Shudra and the Pariah, and the afflictions and miseries of the people; and his heart expanded in love and sympathy. Later on he went to America, attained great success and came to be honoured by many. He then wrote to Sashi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda) at the Alambazar Math, "Look, Shashi, I now understand, it is all the Master's work. Why he loved me so much, why He taught me so much, I see it all now." Getting his letter, it occurred to us that we too must do something. Then we felt we must study. But we had no money with us to buy books or anything. A devotee came from Bombay. He gave some money, and with that we purchased two volumes of Webster's Dictionary. We next got an almirah, a desk and other things, and the desire for work and service also came to possess us. Whoever says that the spirit of work is ours speaks falsehood. It was Swamiji who brought us together as an Order, and none else. Those who criticise do not know the history of the Order. Swamiji started it at the instance of the Master.

In those days Swamiji used to go to the shrine room very regularly both morning and evening, and meditate for a long time. Two or three weeks before he passed away, we were once standing under the mango tree in the courtyard of the Math. Swamiji just came down from the shrine room, and abruptly said, as if seeing a

prophetic vision, "Look here, this current that has now begun, will flow on for seven or eight hundred years." Then followed other talks.

Of this movement we have seen a little; you all will see much more. Many fine young men will be coming to join us. We have been here witnessing all this growth from the beginning. Believe me it is Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother—the Protectress of the universe—that are guiding the movement. It is not you or any of us that are doing it. When doubt comes, look back a little, and you will know the truth. Let there be any amount of disturbance or difficulty. Nothing shall continue for long.

If any one thinks that the organisation is moving at the sweet will and pleasure of any body, his mind is really clouded. But even such persons will progress when they rely on Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother for their support. For the Lord's mercy is unconditioned. Bhagawam Sri Krishna has said in the Gita:—

"I have, O son of Pritha, no duty, nothing that I have not gained, and nothing that I have to gain, in the three worlds; yet, I continue in action. If ever, I did not continue in work, without relaxation, men, O son of Pritha, would in every way, follow in My wake. If I did not do work, these worlds would perish. I should be the cause of the admixture of races, and I should ruin these beings."

He who is the full embodiment of Godhood has nothing to gain or lose. Even then He works out of His mercy for mankind, and this mercy is unconditioned.

When many persons unite for carrying on a work, it is natural that troubles should arise occasionally. But they will all be over in time. In an organisation no work is possible without a person at the head. We have Swamiji's rules, and our work will go on under the guidance of these rules. You many also seek my advice. You are no longer children, and you need not be told, "Do this and do that" on every occasion. When really necessary, I shall certainly give you advice.

A few direct disciples of the Master are still living, and here I am with you always. But I am old and ill, and too weak to go even downstairs. My nature is also not to interfere in anything. I know, I am firmly convinced that Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother are with us. There is no need for me to say much. You all trust me, you freely consult me and I give you my best advice.

Along with work if Japam and meditation are continued regularly, there will be no trouble; we have certainly to work. Our life is not for passing in places like, Hardwar or Hrishikesh living on

Madhukari Bhiksha.* Swamiji himself went to Hrishikesh and came back with this experience. A stay at such a place is good for a time but not for all times. While at Dakshineswar the Master made us beg, but that was to make us get rid of our egoism. One should live on alms for a short time just to overcome the pride of birth, learning, etc.

Do you not see Swami Vivekananda went to America and returned after doing so much work? There also how much he used to meditate! Without doing the prescribed meditation and prayer no good work can be accomplished. As regards work some representative members of the Order should meet together and consider all its aspects and decide upon a particular course. This will certainly conduce to the general welfare; it will not lead to anything wrong. Each person will give his suggestion and when a decision is taken after considering all the suggestions given, it can do no harm.

What a trouble because of egoism that makes us feel 'this act will be to my loss and that to my profit'! My children, meditation and prayer are absolutely necessary. These must be constantly practised. Everything else will be righted then. In meditation forget work, Order, monastery and everything, and remember only the Lord's presence and your existence. Slowly your existence also has to be forgotten. If work leads to egotism, is it good work? No, it is bad work. If you feel the presence of God in man, that makes real service, Will such feeling come easily from the beginning? No. At first one must try to cultivate it believing in the words of the Guru, and then do the work. Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swamiji have said so; believe them and work.

This much I have understood: Sri Ramakrishna is the Founder of Righteousness, and Swamiji its organiser. Sri Ramakrishna is the aphorism and Swamiji is the commentary. It is from the facts in Sri Ramakrishna's life that Swami Vivekananda received his idea of service. Sri Ramakrishna told Mathur Babu in Deoghar, seeing the destitute and famine-stricken Santals there, "Give them some oil for bathing, a cloth each for wearing and at least one full meal. If you don't, I shall stay with them. And let all the pilgrimage go. You are the Divine Mother's treasurer. Why can you not give?" Again, there was a failure of crops for years in Mathur's estate near Ranaghat-Kushtia, and this ended in a severe famine. There also Sri Ramakrishna insisted on Mathur's remitting the rents, saying that he was but the Keeper of Mother's wealth, and must excuse payment. What a great compassionate heart Swamiji had! Seeing all this he laid down the path of service.

* Cooked food begged from door to door (like honey gathered by bee from flower to flower), and considered to be purifying.

Swami Brahmananda used to say, "Give fourteen annas of your mind to God, and it is enough if you do service with the remaining two annas." In the Gita Sri Krishna has said, "I exist, supporting this whole world by a portion of Myself." The Purusha Sukta also says, "A fourth of Me is the entire universe, and the remaining three fourths exist as the Immortal in the Heavens". The Lord supports the universe by a part of His infinite power. Him we must remember and meditate on constantly. Tulsidas has said, "With the mouth utter Rama's name, with the hand do His work". Living on alms at Hrishikesh is not our ideal. Hari Maharaj loved solitude greatly and lived in Hrishikesh and such other places for a long time. Even he said, "We are cheats. Do we really meditate all day long" At best we practise meditation for three or four hours, and idle away the rest of the day. Living a life of begging with the right spirit is good for six months or at most a year. It is preferable that two Sadhus stay together.

I have got another thing to say. It is very good to study. When it is not possible to make Japam and meditation, Scriptures may be studied, and this engages the mind well. Hari Maharaj always used to keep books such as the Gita, Chandi, Vivekachudamani, Upanishads, Vedanta Sūtras, etc., with him. He used to study much, and this was itself a meditation. He would take up the thoughts of a few passages in the Gita or the Upanishads and meditate on them. Really, reading is very good, it is very beneficial. I have seen in Kankhal Sadhus walking four miles for going out to answer the calls of nature. They would waste three or four hours in useless wanderings.

In us, I see, there is always a feeling of responsibility. It does not leave us after a good meditation, nay, not even after Samadhi. Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother came for the good of the world. We are their servants; how can we escape the responsibility of carrying on their Mission?

As regards real meditation, it only lasts for a very short time. While meditating for two or three hours, one may perchance succeed in getting deep meditation like a flash of lightning for a minute or two, and that too by His grace. But this means much; it produces very valuable results.

To-day is the birthday of Hari Maharaj. I pray to the Lord, "May you all be blessed. May you all get true knowledge and devotion! May you all progress, go ahead, go ahead." This is my only prayer to Him.

INDIA'S NATIONAL SOLIDARITY

By Swami Nirlepananda

When discussing India's past political history, we, now-a-days are apt to connive at the well-known but all too-important fact that *Ind is a veritable continent by herself*. Her mere physical geography, her stupendous extent and vastness, stood a great way in forbidding formation of a political cohesion and compactness; specially, was it so, in ancient days, when the unifying powers of steam, electricity, wireless, etc., were undreamt of. Looked at in this light, it was comparatively easy for a France, a Spain, a Great Britain or a Holland (even before Marconi) to rise respectively one after another each like one man with one idea, one all-absorbing, fiery life-principle before impending, attacking, onrushing alien armies to pollute their fair, free faces by depriving them of their much-prized liberty.

To have attempted to weld together in ancient days such a continent-like land as ours, as one entity, was undoubtedly something unique in our history, as well as in the history of humanity. Only in recent modern days it has been possible for the one distant British crown to hold sway over us as a single unit, by the grace of scientific advancements in various directions, with its own efforts behind everything, of course. For want of fuller, present-day available, quick inter-communications, Muslim rule in India could not be a total prototype of what we now have. Science has excellently played her part as a handmaid of political solidarity.

In the year of Grace Nineteen Hundred and Thirty, it has again become comparatively easy for us to think of a future India's national solidarity and of working, each one of us, his part towards hastening that coveted end,—when much to our satisfaction and fruition too, India will rise like one man for her national welfare,—political, economic, cultural,—and what not?

Scientific warfare and all that it means, has come to stay. Present day International Law has become incidentally after the Great War, extremely complicated. And after every similar killing-business in future each day growing in volume, inhumanity and thoroughness,—it will go on becoming more complex. Geographically small countries have been enabled with their scientifically full military, air and naval arrangements, to hold sway over seas and train themselves up as First, Second, Third or unnumbered class of Imperial Powers in the world to-day. This is all well-known to us who have the privilege to live out pages of present-day universal history.

India had in a greater, deeper sense in the past epochs, many different provinces within her, with (in one word) different culture-streams; with far fewer chances of mutual alliances. Differences in provincial life-processes still survive. But fortunately for us, we have more chances of inter-communication and understanding, more possibilities of forgetting our separateness, our seclusion, and being convinced of our compactness, our bond, our unity, our common self-interest. For instance, the modern post office has linked together by so quick a thought-interchange, two distant places in India like Khatra and Madras, which is a far cry, after all. Let us all be fully conscious of our golden link of connection and hold it fast to our bosom.

Let us at this stage, ponder over a particular point of ancient Indian political history. Perhaps quite unparalleled in the whole ancient history of the world, the Mauryan national Imperial Power (4th cent. B. C.) in the land of *Bharatavarsha*, under the wise, able and unequalled leadership of a (really Maharaja) Chandragupta with that famous, political genius, the ever vigilant, Kautilya as his fellow-worker and sponsor always by his side,—had the almost superhuman heart, the rare boldness to practicalise a political solidarity of the different Indian provinces under one crown, one sway, one State-ideal, one management. It was a huge experiment, a task which none but they could tackle. Although not logically, fully completed, yet, but for it again, they have left an indelible mark in the sea-sands of all history. It was veritably, literally worthy of a real prince among men. In Vedic times there were attempts merely for provincial political unity by a Prince or Princess like Sudasa; but what Chandragupta dreamt of and actualised to a great extent, superseded all Pre-Mauryan and even Post-Mauryan Independent India's political achievements.

Next, we come to education problem. It cannot be satisfactorily proved for good that there was lack of opportunities for secular education of the masses in bygone free days in any age. On the other hand there must have been sufficient of it, as in all independent lands. Unless we posit this, how can we explain such remarks of foreign travellers like Megasthenes that among Indians theft or falsehood were unknown? Can we wash these away as coming entirely from enthusiasts who neglected reality totally? An allied question will naturally crop up here. In what form universal primary education (if at all) flourished here in the age we are speaking of? Certainly science not being in the stage as it now is, in those days when printing and books were unknown—oral and written devices mainly were resorted to. The vernacular *Kathakas* that still survive in our villages

served as powerful factors in our ancient characteristic mass education movement. There were the village doctors, *Purohitas* and *Gurumahasayas* too. Naturally first hand, direct methods in education (as later on in Socratic Greece) were the order of the day. Modern kindergarten system may be viewed as a mere re-discovery.

In matters of spiritual education there was certain amount of reservation. The doctrine of individual fitness (or thirst perhaps?) or *Adhikaravada* prevailed very strong. Generally speaking, the three upper castes—*Dvijas* at a certain stage of their lives were considered proper fields for receiving the spiritual seeds. This feature of Indian social culture history must not be lost sight of. Even in the Upanishadic days again, we have instances too of men allowed to enter the inner sanctum of spiritual Sarasvati (*Para Vidya*) whose castes were entirely unknown or ignored. But in the process of time as political fetters were forged for us, degeneration came. And the dangerous doctrine of monopoly of one caste in spiritual and sacred scriptural teaching asserted itself as uppermost. The *Bauris* of Bengal have been deprived of the advantage of Brahmanical ministration when persons die in their fold. Their souls are allowed to go unsaved for want of a socially approved system of *Sradha*. And any water touched and borne by them is polluted for the so-called higher castes. The village barbers do not shave them. This is extreme injustice,—an instance of our cruel social pin-pricks. Most shamefully we still call these errors of birth! And we were ruined thus step by step. But fortunately for us at every dark hour the light of unconventional, spiritually free saints saved us from utter ruin to some extent. But they too could not do much having not behind them the all too necessary Governmental sanction. In matters of scriptural education generally speaking (through hand-written *Punthis*) India south of the Vindhya seemed to be more rigid and stony than the other half. There were in the north the leaven of liberal movements like that of the *Jinas* and the *Bauddhyas*.

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At every moment of our political history when we were ourselves and had our hands, our say, in the adjustment of national, Governmental budgets, we gave invariably good account of ourselves so far as universal primary, secular education was concerned, like all free men and women. Even in tracing the steps through which India lost her political power, her political privilege during Muslim and British days respectively, we find that she lost her independence part by part, province after province,—piecemeal. We don't know if history will not repeat itself once more here, and by the will of the God of Indian history and our concerted efforts we shall restore ourselves, be

ourselves by reversing the wheel of political destiny, province after province. At every turn we were not ourselves and became political serfs, hewers of wood and drawers of water, as they say, things were different. Maxmuller has somewhere recorded that even when *Bharatavarsha* was serving her Muslim political masters, in the province of Bengal alone there were 80,000 *Pathasalas* and *Makhtabs*. But where are they?

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Let us look at Chandragupta in another light. His political jurisdiction included the whole of Beluchiethan (what is known as the north western scientific frontier), the whole of *Uttarapatha* or Northern India, coming far down into the South as far as the Palar River. The rest of the extreme South was waiting to be included under one national rod. He was removed by Providence. The next long political regime of Asoka comes up now for our consideration and scrutiny. The whole of India (incidentally, the world) was, as if expectantly watching and awaiting, the completion of the national political process. It seemed as if the political evolution of India was well-nigh on the verge of reaching its rod-letter or gala day, and the souls of all our previous political fathers were as if indetectively hailing that consummation. In their own ages they also in their own ways and capacities, were working in the same vineyard for the same end!

But that could not be so for Asoka. He mixed up issues. He took up the ochre-robe and instead of retiring from the royal throne, from the public political life, he still chose to remain where he was. He still seated himself upon material royalty. It was not the usually expected, matter of course. It was unnatural. It was deluding. He left undone what Chandragupta's action indicated to be his regal duty. He marred the political life of India. This serious action of his may be considered, from the standpoint of political principle, as a piece of Himalayan blunder, which he ought not to have committed,—he who had admirably negated his fleshy self.

Asoka forgot his *Kshatriya* tradition altogether. The ideal of non-killing on the part of kings was wholesale unapproved of by India's hoary political principles and sanction behind him. He set that aside and still wanted to remain a king. The Kalinga episode was too much for his un-kingly temperament. Supposing even that India lost ninety nine times what she got—viz., independence under one national king, still that proud, sweet remembrance would have survived and proved beneficial.

Let us come to an analogous, parallel instance. Prince Yudhis-thira after the battle of Kurukshetra became *sakalottarapathanayaka*,

master of the whole of Northern India. He also became a *Bhikshu*. But after he installed Parikshit on the throne with political India's approval, he retired from the regal field. Yudhisthira acted rightly. Asoka ought to have been a Yudhisthira, behaving likewise. If he (Asoka) felt the urge for adopting a monk-life as something irresistible he ought to have put his crown on somebody who had a mind Kshatriya-wise to complete India's dream of political unity under one national Raj. But he did not do it. Had he done that, he would have been called the first person—a hero, most ungrudgingly. It was most decidedly against India's royal tradition, transmitted through the experience of untold centuries. Faults or mistakes or misjudgments committed from responsible positions do not merely tell at once on the immediate environment of a nation. Their ill-effects dive deep, percolate,—persist long and ruin the whole future destiny of a people.

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The modern age has come to our village cottage-doors; we should not wholly dispense with our own old methods in mass education. There is truth in that too. But we ought to supplement our programme by accepting recent contrivances. Ramakrishna has most wisely asked or urged us to be current coins in every way. Our poor percentage of literacy has become just now, an element of division, instead of holding, unifying us together to the unity-centre of our common Motherland. It is tending to disunite ourselves. But the only cure for it lies in added attempts to increase the percentage, individually and collectively.

SELECTIONS FROM THE ADHYATMA RAMAYANA

AYODHYA KANDA: CHAPTER I.

[Note: Sage Narada was deputed by Brahma the Creator to remind Sri Rama of the mission for which he incarnated on earth. He accordingly sought an interview with Sri Rama who in according him welcome with due reverence and respect said amongst other things that he—a householder—felt greatly blessed by his (sage Narada's) visit. Hearing these words the sage addressed the following prayer.]

SAGE NARADA'S PRAYER:
ALL ARE THE MANIFESTATION OF
LAKSHMI-NARAYAN

अथ तं नारदोऽप्याह गधवं भक्तवत्सलं ॥
किं मोक्षयसि मां राम वार्क्यैर्लोकांनुसारिभिः ॥ ९ ॥

9. On hearing these words, Narada said to (the scion of Raghu clan) Raghava, the Protector of devotees: Why dost Thou delude me, Oh Rama, by talking like ordinary worldly people?

संसार्यदमितिप्रोक्तं सत्यमेतत्त्वया विभो ॥
जगतामादिभृता या सा माया गृहिणी तव ॥ १० ॥

10. The statement of thine, Oh Lord, that Thou art a householder is too true The Maya which is the primordial cause of the universe is. Thy consort.

त्वन्नात्रिकर्पाज्जायन्ते तस्यां ब्रह्मादयः प्रजाः ॥
त्वदाश्रया सदा भाति माया या त्रिगुणात्मिका ॥ ११ ॥

11. This Maya which consisting of the three Gunas ever shines having Thee as her support gives birth to all creatures from Brahma downwards by virtue of her contiguity to Thee.

सृतेऽजस्रं शुक्लकृष्णलोहिताः सर्वदा प्रजाः ॥
लोकत्रयमहागेहे गृहस्यस्त्वमुदाहृतः ॥ १२ ॥

12. Beings, white black and red are continuously born in the mighty abode of the three worlds, of which Thou art said to be the resident.

त्वं विष्णुर्जानकी लक्ष्मीः शिवस्त्वं जानकी शिवा ॥
ब्रह्मा त्वं जानकी वाणी सूर्यस्त्वं जानकी प्रभा ॥ १३ ॥

13. Thou art Vishnu and Sita is Lakshmi; Thou art Shiva and Sita is Siva (or Parvati); Thou art Brahma and Sita is Sarasvati (the Goddess of learning); Thou art the Sun and Sita is the splendour.

भवान् शशांकः सीता तु रोहिणी शुभलक्ष्मणा ॥

शक्रस्त्वमेव पौलोमी सीता स्वाहानलो भवान् ॥ १४ ॥

14. Thou art the Moon and Sita is the all-auspicious Rohini ;¹ Thou art Indra and Sita is Sachi; Thou art Agni and Sita is Swaha.

[Note: 1. Rohini is the name of the fourth lunar mansion containing five stars (Nakshatra), and in mythology it is represented as one of the several daughters of Daksha and the favourite consort of the Moon].

यमस्त्वं कालरूपश्च सीता संयमनी प्रभो ॥

निर्ऋतिस्त्वं जगन्नाथ तामसी जानकी शुभा ॥ १५ ॥

15. Thou art the Yama—the Death himself and Sita is Samjamani the female principle; Thou art, Oh Lord, Niriti (the God of destruction) and, Oh Lord of the universe, Sita is Tamasi (the third of the three qualities of Nature).

राम त्वमेव बह्वर्णो भार्गवी जानकी शुभा ॥

वायुस्त्वं राम सीता तु सदागतिरिति रिता ॥ १६ ॥

16. Thou art Varuna, Oh Rama, and all-blissful Sita is Bhargavi; Thou art Vayu, Oh Rama, and Sita is Sadagati (the ever-moving).

कुवेरस्त्वं राम सीता सर्वसंपत्प्रकीर्तिता ॥

रुद्राणी जानकी प्रोक्ता रुद्रस्त्वं लोकनाशकृत् ॥ १७ ॥

17. Thou art Kuvera, Oh Rama, and Sita is prosperity; Thou art the all-destroyer Rudra and Sita is Rudrani.

लोके स्त्रीवाचकं यावत्तत्सर्वं जानकी शुभा ॥

पुत्रामवाचकं यावत्तत्सर्वं त्वं हि गधव ॥ १८ ॥

तस्माद्व्येकत्रये देव युवाभ्यां नास्ति किंचन ॥ १९ ॥

18—19. (In one word) Whatever is represented by the female sex in this world is the all-blessed Sita and whatever is represented by the other sex art Thou, Oh Raghava. Hence, Oh Lord, in the three worlds there is nothing besides you both.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

HINDUISM AND ISLAM

The science of philology is one of the branches of learning that have contributed much to the development of historical knowledge in the modern world. The services of this new science have, however, been not infrequently used in a way that seems ridiculous to a lay mind, by scholars whose hobby it is to weave webs of theories over the fancied resemblances of words. To this category belongs the recent attempt of Mr. Niamatullah Khan, "Gonhar", B. A., to discover some new affinity between Hinduism and Islam on the basis of the resemblance of a few words that his fancy seeks to trace to a common

linguistic origin. Mr. A. Hameed Hasan writes as follows by way of an exposition of this novel theory in the *Swarajya* of the 5th of March:—"According to the Puranas, the Sanathana Dharma Hindus believe in the three incarnations of God, viz., Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Mr. Niamatulla Khan has succeeded on reliable historical facts in discovering during his recent researches that the Hindu trinity is not mythological but real, and that the three Hindu deities, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva were originally the prophets of God. According to his researches two of them are the prophets of Islam, and the third a son of another Prophet of Islam....."Brahma according to him is the Sanskritised form and corruption of the name of Prophet Abraham, and the Vedas are the inspired books of God revealed to Abraham through the Archangel Gabriel. Vishnu is the Sanskrit name of the Prophet Noah, the prefix "Vaish" being added to the name for the reason that he learnt the art of carpentry on the command of God and built the great canoe or boat to protect him and his family from the Great Deluge. Siva he says is originally Esau who was the eldest son of the Prophet Abraham and according to him the ancestor of all the Aryan races.

Continues Mr. A. Hassan, "The Aryans take pride that their ancestors migrated from the Central Asia, but they have apparently forgotten that their real fatherland was Sham, now known as Syria... It is earnestly hoped that important historical researches will tend to prove the affinity of Sanathana Dharma to Islam. Once the Arya Samajists in particular and Hindus in general recognised and admitted that Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are the Muslim Abraham, Noah and Esau and none else, the differences between Hindus and Muslims will cease and the affinity between them will increase."

Researches of this type will be more helpful in establishing the dependence of Aryan and especially Hindu culture on the Semitic civilisation than in creating more friendly feelings between the Hindus and the Muslims. There is again a strange irony in the fact that the propounder of this theory seeks justification for Hindu mythology from the traditions and stories current among the Jews as if the latter are all genuine history. The theory itself to our eyes is but a perversion of philology, the author having tried to establish an identity of personalities on the basis of a few common sounds in the Sanskrit and Hebrew names. The Hindu conception of trinity and the Hebrew conception of prophets have no traces of resemblance. According to the Hindu scriptures the trinity are neither prophets nor incarnations, but the three aspects of the Supreme Being in Its threefold functions of creation, preservation and destruction. They are also accordingly conceived as possessing attributes, powers and personal adornments none of which are found in any form in the Hebrew prophets. In the whole range of Hindu mythology we never hear of Vishnu learning carpentry from any one, or making any boat to save his family from a deluge. Nor is Siva the son of Brahma as the theory of the writer seems to indicate. In view of such great gulf of difference in the conception of these personalities it is needless to point out the absurdity of a theory the whole basis of which lies in the resemblances between a few sounds and that too very much strained. In fact the writer himself feels it partly when he says, "One important fact must be borne in mind that according to the Bible and the Kuran, Noah and Abraham were the greatest enemies of idol worship. It is an irony of history that Hinduism is its votary." Thus the writer in his shrewd attempt to establish a close affinity between the conceptions of Hindu trinity and the Hebrew prophets, points out

inadvertently the fundamental difference existing between the teachings associated with the two, and thereby shows the absurdity of his own theory regarding the identity of their personalities. Hindu-Muslim relationship is not going to be made more cordial and harmonious by such fantastic theories; on the other hand they may even embitter the feelings all the more. Unity will be achieved only when priests and politicians cease to exploit the passions and prejudices of the masses for achieving their own selfish purposes. Affinity between the two great faiths should be sought to be established on other grounds that relate to the fundamental verities of spiritual life than on those of the chance coincidences of words and sounds only.

VEDANTISTS IN AMERICA

In these days of colour complex and racial animosities it is indeed a refreshing thing to note a few silver linings of cordiality and good will in the otherwise dreary texture of present day international relationship. Such indeed is the feeling that rises in one's mind when one reads the short article from the pen of Dr. Sudhindra Bose, appearing in *the Modern Review* of March 1930 under the caption of "Vedantists in America" wherein Dr. Bose gives an account of the work that Indian monks are doing in America. Writes Dr. Bose, "Modern India in its hurly-burly of politics, often forgets those noble souls who are spreading the light of Vedanta in America. Any one with half an eye can see that the message of these consecrated men has been beneficial not only in America but to India as well. On the one hand they have placed before America, torn and distracted by hundreds of Christian sects, an ennobling ideal of Universal Religion, and on the other they have helped to build a bridge of better understanding and appreciation between India and the New World..... Those who belittle the services of these self-less men are in the kindergarten state of their thinking....."

Referring to the Swamis and the extent and nature of their work he says, ".....The first Vedanta Society in America was founded by Swami Vivekananda in the city of New York in 1894.....To day there are six Vedanta centres served by nearly a dozen Swamis. They are all members of the Order of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. The record of the activities of this group of devoted workers in the cause of humanity calls to mind the early Buddhist missionaries who went from India far and wide and preached the gospel of Gautama Buddha.....The Indian missionaries have not come to the United States with a mercantile outlook.....The religion of the Vedas as taught by Indian missionaries is as different from calico Christianity of Stanley as North Pole is from the South Pole. Moreover the Indian missionaries are men of education, culture and refinement. They are, without any exception, men of exemplary character.....It often thrills me to compare them with many Christian stalwarts like, for example, Sir John Hawkins—that pious English burglar and pirate who enjoined his men to 'love one another' and 'serve God daily' while he kidnapped African Negroes to sell them into slavery.....Christian missions in India, with a few exceptions, breed ill-will, hatred and hot antagonism.....Now, the Indian missionaries never meddle with American political and social problems. They confine themselves exclusively to the field of religion or to be more accurate, the message of Vedanta."

Referring to the scope and extent of their work he says: "The task of the Swamis is by no means easy. Most Americans are brought up on mass-emotions and seldom think rationally.....The

intellectual presentation of Vedanta is not always pleasant to the American 'sermon tasters'. The Swamis, so far as I know, keep Vedanta in its original purity and majesty and never stoop to adulterate it with healing and mystery-mongering. Moreover they do not seek to make converts, "Vedanta does not as yet appeal to the mass minds in America", confided to me Swami Prabhavananda of Portland. "It gains ground slowly, but surely. The ideal of universality and the logical explanations of the religion of Vedanta appeal to the reflective minds of the country....." The prospects of Vedanta work in this country, according to those who are in close touch with it, are bright. The demand for Vedanta societies is increasing rapidly. The people with whom the Swamis come into contact are mostly sympathetic towards India and Indian philosophy. One must not forget, however, they have to work against many handicaps: foreign customs, foreign tongue, opposition of Christian churches and inherited inertia....."

The work of spreading the teachings of Vedanta was declared by Swami Vivekananda to be the chief item of his foreign policy. The only thing that Modern India can give to the West in exchange for what she has to learn from them in matters relating to science, industries and politics, is the teachings of Vedanta. The work that has been done in popularising this is small, but as the writer has indicated, it has received appreciation at the hands of a section of foreigners. What is required is that a larger number of young Indians possessing exemplary character have to go abroad for this purpose as the ancient Buddhist missionaries did in the days of India's cultural greatness.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE VEDANTA SOCIETY, CHICAGO, U. S. A.

The inauguration ceremony of the Vedanta Society of Chicago, U. S. A. was celebrated on the 19th of January at 8 P. M. at the New Masonic Temple. The delightfully decorated hall was filled up to its utmost capacity by a crowd drawn from the noblest of Chicago's society.

With glowing tribute to the memory of the great Swami Vivekananda who sowed the seeds of Indian Philosophy and Religion on the soil of Chicago during the World's Fair of 1893, Prof. Archibald G. Baker of the University of Chicago and Mrs. Carey W. Rhodes, a well-known social worker of Chicago, and a lover of Hindu Philosophy, introduced to the public Swami Gnaneshwarananda who came from New York to open the new centre at Chicago. A wire-less message of blessing and congratulation from Swami Shivananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Bolur, India, and also messages of congratulations and good-will from all the Swamis of the Order now working in America, together with the messages of many prominent American ladies and gentlemen were read out which were highly appreciated by the audience.

Sreejuti Hariindra Chattopadhyaya, the young poet of India, brother of Sreemati Sarojini Naidu, recited a poem of his own composition "The Light of the Soul" at the opening of the programme which created a wonderful atmosphere for the solemn occasion.

The Society is at present holding its regular Sunday Services at the New Masonic Temple Hall. The office and study room of the Society is located at the Plymouth Building, 417, S. Dearborn St., Room 901.

The newly established Vedanta Society of Chicago has removed a longfelt want, felt very keenly by all the Indians as well as those Americans who are familiar with the work of Swami Vivekananda in America.

TOURS OF SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

At the earnest request of friends Swami Yatiswarananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch, Madras left for Coimbatore on the 1st February, in connection with the opening of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, a home for the boarding, lodging and training of poor deserving boys.

On the 5th the Swami proceeded to Trichur to take part in the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Vivekodaya Samajam which met to celebrate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda. Besides opening the seventh Vivekodaya Fine Art, and Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition, and distributing the prizes to the successful pupils and the exhibitors, he delivered three lectures on "The Spiritual Outlook", "The Practice of Religion" and "Swami Vivekananda's Message of Service" on the 7th, 8th and 9th. He returned to Madras on the 11th.

The Swami also visited Tindivanam on the 23rd in connection with the celebration of the birthday of Swami Vivekananda. He spoke on "Swami Vivekananda's Message of Dynamic Hinduism", laying stress on the fundamental unity of the Eternal Religion of India and the ideal of service embodied in it.

SWAMI GHANANANDA IN ANDHRA DESHA

Swami Ghanananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras left for Andhra Desa on the 18th January last on a propaganda tour in connection with the work of the Telugu Section of the Publication Department of the Ramakrishna Math. He visited Nellore, Gudur, Rajahmundry, Ellore and Palakal. Besides explaining to a large number of friends the principles of the Vedanta and the activities of the Mission in conversations and private interviews, he spoke at Rajahmundry on "The Message of Sri Ramakrishna and the Ideals and Work of the Mission" on the 2nd of February at a meeting presided over by Rao Sahib Mr. C. V. Krishnaswami Ayyar, B. A., B. L., District and Sessions Judge. At Ellore he delivered a series of lectures and discourses from the 8th to the 12th of February at the invitation of friends. On the 8th and 9th he lectured on "Sri Ramakrishna and his Message to the Modern World" and "The Permanent Basis of Indian Nationalism". These lectures were presided over by Dewan Bahadur Mr. Mecherla Ramachandra Rao Pantulu and by Mr. S. R. Das, M. A., B. L. On the 10th he gave a discourse on "The Evolution and the Attainment of Perfection", comparing and contrasting the Eastern and Western conceptions of evolution and progress and answering a few questions by the audience at the end of the discourse. On the 11th he held a religious conversation and on the 12th he gave a class-talk to the students of the Municipal High School on "How to Supplement Modern Educational Training".

From Ellore the Swami proceeded to Palakal. After a brief stay there he came again to Nellore. On the 24th he addressed a large gathering of students of the Venkatagiri Raja's College on "The Need

for Education on Indian lines". At the request of the Nellore Progressive Union he also delivered two lectures under its auspices on "Sri Ramakrishna: the Significance of His Life and Teachings" and "The Heart of Bharata Varsha" on the 25th and 26th February. These were followed up by a discourse on "The Different Paths of God-realisation" and a religious conversation on the 27th and 28th.

The Swami returned to Madras on the 1st of March.

ACTIVITIES OF SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

Swami Chidbhavananda of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Ootacamund, started on the 31st December last on a tour through Salem District. He visited Trichengode, Salem, Nanakkal, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri and other towns. In most of these places he spoke in Tamil and sometimes in English at the invitation of the public on 'Hints on Education,' 'Introduction to the Bhagavat Gita,' 'Ideal in Life,' 'Temple worship,' 'The Gita as a universal scripture,' and 'The Practice of Religion.' The lectures and discourses were well appreciated. Besides, many of those interested in the ideals and work of the Ramakrishna Mission, enrolled themselves as subscribers to the Ramakrishna Vijayam and the Vedanta Kesari. During the tour which lasted for a month the principles of Vedanta as expounded by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were disseminated in many of the important places of the district.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE R. K. MATH, MYLAPORE, MADRAS

The Ninety-Fifth Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great solemnity and devotion at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. The Thithi Pooja which fell on the 2nd of March was performed in a fitting manner with special worship and Homam. A large number of devotees partook of the holy Prasadam. The public celebration took place on the following Sunday, the 9th March 1930. As usual there were Bhajana and devotional music all through the fore noon in the Ashrama hall which was decorated in a tasteful manner for the occasion. About two thousand poor people were fed sumptuously in the R. K. M. Students' Home premises. In the evening there was a public meeting with Mr. S. V. Ramanunthy, I C S. in the chair. Mr. A. Srinivasachariar, B. A., L. T. of Srivalliputtur spoke in Tamil on the "Divinity of Sri Ramakrishna" portraying in a masterly fashion the superhuman traits in Sri Ramakrishna's character by a thorough and exhaustive review of the Master's life. This was followed by an eloquent address in English by Mr. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, M. A., B. Sc., Bar-at-Law, Reader, Madras University. Mr. Sastry refuted in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings the scathing criticism that Mr. Bertrand Russell has levelled against religion in his recent essay on "Religion and Civilisation". Miss Catherine Sherwood of Boston then spoke a few words about her impressions of the work of Vedantists in America. The learned President in his concluding remarks dwelt specially upon Sri Ramakrishna's experience of Sanadhi of which he tried to give an explanation in modern terms in the light of the space-time concept of relativists. Dewan Bahadur Mr. C. Ramanujachariar then proposed the usual vote of thanks to the lecturers and Chairman. The function came to a close with Mangalarathi and the distribution of Prasadam.

THE REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE
DISPENSARY, MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

The management of the dispensary places before the public a report of the work done during the year 1929. It came into existence five years ago and has all along been rendering valuable help to the suffering poor without distinctions of caste or creed. The existence of this dispensary at Mylapore has been more than justified by a very rapid increase in the daily attendance of patients many of whom came even from such distant places as Saidapet and Rayapuram. Their number in 1926, the second year of its existence, was 5,109 whereas it rose to 30,932 in 1929 as against 18,222 in the previous year. This growing popularity of the institution is greatly due to the spirit of worship in which the work is carried on here as well as the loving care that is bestowed on the patients in the treatment of their maladies.

It is needless to point out that the work of the dispensary has immensely increased during the brief period of its existence. And the fulfilment of the following needs has become an urgent necessity for conducting its activities on a successful basis. These needs are: (1) *A Pucca Dispensary Building*:—The work is being continued as before in a small shed thatched with palmyra leaves. There being only one room it is quite insufficient to accommodate the growing number of patients, the doctor, the compounders, the stock of medicines and outfits. It is, therefore, proposed to erect a building on a suitable plot of land at an estimated cost of Rs. 10,000 against which a sum of Rs. 1734-7 has already been subscribed. Any one wishing to perpetuate the memory of his or her dear relation or friend can do so by contributing the amount required for constructing one or more rooms or the whole building. (2) *A General Fund*:—In view of the rise in the number of patients two whole time workers, besides the visiting honorary doctor, have to be engaged exclusively for the dispensary. The cost of maintaining these two monastic workers together with the expenditure for medicines come at present to Rs. 100 per month. To meet the growing demands on service more funds, medicines and honorary workers are necessary. (3) *Up-to-date Appliances and Outfits*:—For want of these many patients have to be denied service and the talents and experience of the honorary doctor too cannot be fully utilised. This management appeals to the generous public to come forward with their quota of financial support in aid of this noble cause. Any contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Yatiswarananda, President, R. K. Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.

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